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TOWARDS REUNION

BEING CONTRIBUTIONS TO MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BY CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND FREE CHURCH WRITERS

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This volume has found its birth and spring in the kindling fellowship of two successive Conferences, which were held at Mansfield College, Oxford, in 1918 and 1919, between members of the Church of England and members of the Free Churches.

We welcome it as recalling a common and delightful memory, and also as expressing in diverse forms our common aim; and therefore, without incurring any responsibility for individual utterances, our names, as members of Conference, at the request of the Editors, appear at the beginning of this book.

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PREFACE

In a private letter written by Professor Gwatkin from Cambridge in 1910, these words occur: "*ἵνα ὦσι τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἕν*—that they may be perfected into unity. Unity is not the way to perfection, but perfection is the way to unity." The Principal of the Ely Theological College, Dr. H. L. Goudge, in the *Constructive Quarterly* more recently puts the same truth thus: "There is every reason to believe that the gift of the Spirit is able to bring us to visible unity; but no reason to believe that visible unity is in itself able to bring to us the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Amid all modern schemes for unity, this side of the truth must stand out pre-eminent in all our thought. Without it, we shall fail, as in the past, but with far less excuse. History has been written in vain, if we have not learnt this. We have seen visible unity and spiritual impotence side by side upon too vast a scale, and the result has been well-nigh fatal to the moral progress of the world.

But the history of the Church of England and of the Free Churches alike shows the noble part that all have

taken in the long struggle for spiritual freedom; and we are not likely to renounce the heritage of our fathers. No responsible man or school of thought desires at this late day mere outward unity or uniformity. But earnest men have seen a vision, with ever-growing distinctness, of a great spiritual and visible unity, which gives glad recognition and welcome to every variety of spiritual form that has proved its value to the world. And they know full well that this will one day be realised, not as the result of outward organisation, or even of mutual good-will, but as the greatest, and perhaps the latest, gift of the Spirit of Jesus Christ to His Church.

This then is our aim in putting out this volume, and it is well that this method of achieving it should be emphasised at the outset of our task.

Many solutions of the problem of reunion are being offered in our days, but some of them at least can be dismissed with speed and certainty. We feel at once that they demand too much, or, on the other hand, they involve too little. Some savour too much of a worldly expediency; others lose themselves in mystical ineffectiveness. The fact is emerging more and more clearly that it is only along the path of personal and corporate perfection, by the powers of the Holy Spirit, that we can come to the visible unity which will abide. Therefore every conscious surrender to this strong and silent influence of the Holy Spirit is strengthening the movement at its source. Every point of personal

pride, or corporate prejudice, is postponing the great Day of God, when His Glory can be revealed.

For when once unity is achieved, new ranges of power and glory will open out before the Church, and before the world. The Church of Jesus Christ will then be able to give Christ a single and a mighty voice, which can rise strong and clear above the noise and din of contemporary politics. And, on the other side, the world is right in asking, *as a condition of its faith*, that it may be able to see and appreciate the links which unite all Christian people. An invisible unity, that can only be spiritually discerned, is of little service to a non-believing world. It is probably the simple truth that the world is withholding its belief that God sent Jesus Christ, until it *see* clear unity of thought and heart and will amongst Christ's disciples. We have yet to witness the amazing power to compel faith, which lies behind the prayer of Jesus "*that they may be One, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*"

And so we dare not falter, or shirk a plain issue, because of dangers which surround our path. Christian progress is ever a risk, but one abundantly justified when we move along the lines of the Eternal Will. History has other lessons to teach us than that of warning. It points us with equal certainty to the great channels along which has flowed the water of Life; and it is the union of those waters, at this great watershed of time, that we desire under the direction of the Holy Spirit to achieve. There are three great streams that are

noted by all competent historians as contributing to that flow. We name them the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and the Congregational; and every Church polity that is known to Church history will own one or other of these polities as its spiritual home. The Holy Spirit has used them all; and there is therefore no single type of Church government which can claim exclusive validity. Clearly, then, we must see to it that they all find their natural home in the visible unity that is to be, if we are not to witness the arrival of new conflicts within the new fold.

We may rightly expect on other grounds that any Church unity which will stand the test of time will be of complex form. Our modern world is complex and diverse. With a political sagacity that has proved its worth, English people have combined the only three forms of secular government that have been known to men. Monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy have in turn held the field. It has remained for us to combine the vital values of each in a single state, while avoiding the intrinsic weakness in each element. We still keep and revere a Monarchy that is the emblem of the unity of free Commonwealths; but we strictly limit the dangers of autocracy by a Constitution which overshadows and controls the Throne. We are in the very act of reforming a House of Lords, that it may worthily represent the truest aristocracy of England, ruling, not by hereditary privilege, but by conspicuous service in every field of life. Above all stands

the House of Commons, expressing, as we may hope, with ever-increasing accuracy the desires of a free people, and enforcing its will.

The Church, that in earliest days taught the State the art of self-government, may take lessons from its pupil in this later day. It, too, must present a complex unity of government and life, if it is to face successfully the complex unity of a modern world. It must be broad-based on the distinctive elements of all spiritual culture.

Episcopacy will be there, as the emblem and instrument of unity and order, but with strict limitations, lest an unspiritual and independent autocracy once more raise its head to corrupt the Church. Presbytery will be there, with equal spiritual rights and duties, called by the Church itself to exercise its inherent spiritual functions, not in terms of a mere official succession, but in full exercise of spiritual life. But above all, there will stand the great body of believing people, whom we now call the Laity, with definite rights and functions worthy of robust spiritual maturity. This great body must find its clear utterance and witness in some lay-diaconate, which will take its due place in the great councils of the Church, and find its appropriate forms of service for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

In some such way as this all the essential spiritual elements of the past can be worthily conserved. We shall be re-interpreting in modern life the wisdom of

old days, and finding that here we are not wiser than our fathers, who laid down the true framework, on which we have built so ill. The threefold ministry, interpreted afresh, will, we believe, yet hold the field.

But be this as it may. We send out these essays in the full conviction that the only Catholicity strong enough to bear the weight of coming days is the Evangelical. As Evangelicals, of various folds but a single flock, representing not a party spirit but a vital truth, we make our common contribution to the cause that lies near to the heart of Christ, and that awakens deep echoes in the hearts of all His disciples.

The first four writers deal with the subject on its spiritual side, supported by five essays on the general historical and doctrinal positions which form the intellectual basis of our appeal. The following essays deal with certain of its practical aspects; and the attempt is made by their writers to note the progress and power of visible Christian unity in modern life. In the last essay, the silent movements of the One Spirit of God are traced in the Churches of to-day.

One difficulty in the way of the Reunion, that of Church Establishment, we leave on one side as being beyond our present scope. It is clear that the type of "Constitutional" Episcopacy contemplated in this volume as the only possible basis of organic Reunion, cannot be realised under the existing relations of Church and State. And there, for the time being, we must leave the matter.

Each writer is solely responsible for his own contribution. We feel that the free contact of minds will be of far greater value than any uniformity of expression. And we humbly leave it to the Holy Spirit to reveal the essential unity that underlies it all, believing that this spiritual element will perhaps be found to be the most conspicuous contribution we have to offer to the cause of Unity.

To the blessing of God the Holy Spirit, and to the collective judgment of Christ's Church in this divided land, we commend this book.

UT OMNES UNUM SINT.

A. J. Carlyle.
Stuart H. Clark.
J. Scott Lidgett.
J. H. Shakespeare.

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REUNION AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

By the REV. J. SCOTT LIDGETT, M.A., D.D.,

Joint Hon. Secretary of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches.

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REUNION AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

The contention to be made good in this essay is that the promotion of the corporate reunion of all branches of Christ's Church is essential to the advancement of His Kingdom. It is clearly necessary, therefore, at the outset to define what is meant by Christ's Kingdom, and then to consider what is the function of the Church in advancing it.

The term "Christ's Kingdom" may obviously be used in a looser or stricter sense, with a more external or a profounder connotation. In its general acceptance it may perhaps be taken to stand for the establishment of a truly Christian order of civilisation, one that fulfils the ideals of the Christian Religion in regard to every human relationship and concern. Such an order would be based upon the universal recognition by Mankind of the Sovereignty of Christ. In it all human affairs would be governed and all human conduct guided by righteousness, holiness, and love. The ascendancy of this gracious trinity would establish all human life upon the foundation of brotherhood; would abolish the possibility of war, guarantee to all the indispensable conditions of well-being and

happiness, destroy all selfish aims, and transform all sectional interests by a spirit of fellowship that in staying the spirit of strife would abolish its causes. Imagination is at present incompetent to represent the unbounded earthly happiness that would result from such a transformation and the way in which it would make life, even under secular conditions, the earnest of the life of Heaven. The Kingdom of Christ is commonly understood to promise the coming of such an order as the terrestrial manifestation and result of the redemptive grace and the spiritual energies of Christ.

Again, the Kingdom of Christ may be held to stand for the complex of the spiritual energies of which such a transformed order of human life would be the result. This dynamic interpretation of the Kingdom perhaps comes nearer to the meaning of the New Testament than one which regards the Kingdom as an ordered system, or as the *result* of the work and influence of Christ. For it is the active and personal rule of Christ upon which the main stress is always laid, and the frequent references to the *power*, whether of the Kingdom, or of Christ, or of His Spirit, show that the Kingdom is regarded as being, above all, the triumphant and transforming energy which proceeds from our Lord's Person, making good His Sovereignty over the hearts of men and throughout the Universe.

To both these interpretations, however, those who represent what is known as the apocalyptic view take objection. The Kingdom of God, or of Christ, they urge, is a transcendent order, not to be realised under existing conditions, but to be bestowed

upon men eventually as the final gift of Christ at His Coming and to come by means of a catastrophe which will sweep away the present order of things. The life and efforts of the Church may be conceived, according to this view, to prepare the way, though not to hasten the date, of this impending consummation, but they cannot be held, in any strict sense, to *advance* Christ's Kingdom. The life of the Church is to be moulded and maintained in expectation of this great Event, but does not stand in any organic relationship to it.

Careful study of the New Testament, while it furnishes a measure of justification for each of these three views of Christ's Kingdom, affords the means of combining the elements of truth they severally represent in a more comprehensive whole. Our Lord's Nature-parables correct the various abstract representations of the Kingdom, which treat it exclusively or mainly as an order, a dynamic, or a decisive deed by presenting it to us under the governing conception of Life, with its processes, seasons, and interplay of forces. These bring about an ordered development towards a consummation in which judgment and salvation reach their appointed end of complete and final fulfilment. Such Nature-teaching is in accordance with all that we know of Spiritual Life and its manifestations, whether individual or social, personal or historic. Great as may be the effect of personal activity and influence, these, while they may quicken or retard, make or mar human progress, cannot set aside the laws according to which spiritual experience and growth are possible. Any conceivable Kingdom of

Christ must rest upon and develop certain spiritual relations between Christ and His people, and ultimately between God in Christ, on the one hand, and Mankind, as represented by Christ's people, on the other. However we may magnify Divine Grace, Spiritual power, and Sovereign Activity, the way in which these work must needs be determined by the end towards which they are directed and the sphere in which they operate. And these are to be found in the spirit of man, as destined to the fellowship and service of God. Hence mechanical and arbitrary forms of thought are out of place in setting forth Christ's Kingdom. Just because the power by which it is to be realised is Divinely transcendent, it is also pervasively immanent. Its sovereignty is in and through human nature rather than over it. Hence Life, with its laws, is the nearest approach to an adequate representation of the way and the working of Christ's Kingdom.

In our Lord's teaching the Kingdom is seldom, if ever, spoken of as His: it is "the Kingdom of God" or "the Kingdom of Heaven." Perhaps the best guide to what is meant by this Kingdom is to be found in the Lord's Prayer. Its central petition is "Thy Kingdom come." The meaning to be attached to this petition is to be found in what goes before it and what comes after it. The Kingdom is that of Him who is addressed as "Our Father which art in Heaven." The Home, therefore, where the Sovereignty is that of Love, working through all available means for the perfecting of the family in and through its filial relationships, is the surest guide to the meaning

of God's Kingdom. This conclusion is borne out by the first petition, "Hallowed be Thy Name," which calls for a character, a spiritual apprehension and attitude, that shall be in complete accordance with the holy perfection of the manifested character, the "Name," of our Father. Hence this sovereignty reaches its end of love, when His Will is done and when human life answers completely to its Divine original and standard, "as in Heaven so on Earth." The subsequent petitions for daily bread, forgiveness and deliverance are subject to and are the means of accomplishing the supreme ends of the Prayer.

Certain outstanding features of the Lord's Prayer must be noted as bearing upon our subject. To begin with, it is God-centred. He who truly utters it has attained to the Divine standpoint, through the filial spirit which makes the hallowing of our Father's Name, the coming of His Kingdom, and the doing of His Will the supreme and all-embracing objects, not only of petition, but of aspiration and desire. Selfishness is abolished, not only in its common forms, but in its subtlest and most specious manifestation, that of subjectivity in religion. Not only is the prayer addressed in lowly homage and implicit trust to "Our Father which art in Heaven," but what is sought after is His glory, man's well-being and salvation coming to be seen and desired as bound up with this glory of regnant Fatherhood. In the same way and as the consequence of this complete transformation, a complete community of desire and pursuit is established, so that from first to last the "our" and "us" of brotherhood supersede the "mine"

and "me" of self-contained individualism. Hence the family bond, in which our Father and all His children are united, is so supreme as to give living support and direction to an order, which is founded in the highest and inmost truth of things, in the catholic reality that corresponds to the supreme and universal Fatherhood. The inmost truth and the utmost catholicity are indissolubly one in the all-Fatherhood; the Fatherhood is made good in the spiritual realm by the full recognition and the frank acceptance of this catholic truth. Hence all who truly offer this prayer thereby dedicate their whole being to the realisation on earth and among all men of this transcendent and immanent catholicity, according to the ideal that the Divine Fatherhood impresses upon the Universe of Reality—"as in Heaven so on Earth." The spring and inspiration of all true endeavour in every relationship and concern of life are found in the dominant desire to give full effect to the meaning of the Divine Fatherhood in perfected sonship and consequent brotherhood.

It follows from all this that when we speak of Christ's Kingdom the meaning to be attached to the term must be that of the Lord's Prayer. The Kingdom of Christ is the Kingdom of "Our Father" revealed in Christ, the Son, and realised only in and through Him. Only in Christ is there the complete revelation of the reality and meaning of the Fatherhood of God; Christ and Christ alone is the way to the Father. The Christhood of "Jesus, the Son of God," as the Epistle to the Hebrews calls our Lord, consists just in this, that His Prophetic, Priestly and Kingly Offices

are combined in the personal activity by which the Son "brings many sons unto glory," realising His own Sonship in them through redemption and fulfilment, and bringing all the promise of that Sonship to complete and everlasting fruition. Hence the Kingdom of Christ contains and confers every gift that the Fatherly nature and purpose of God move Him to bestow and that the constitution of mankind in and for the Divine Fatherhood impels men, by their very nature, to seek. That which corresponds in man with the Fatherhood of God is an implicit Sonship, which determines all human needs, capacities, powers and vital aims. Sin destroys this Sonship, perverts the nature that is rooted and grounded in it, and, therefore, blights human life and all its manifestations. Christ overcomes sin by restoring and perfecting Sonship with all the personal and social consequences that are bound up with its fulfilment. Hence, "however many soever be the promises of God," contained not only in Holy Scripture but in the human nature which the Scriptures reveal and illuminate, in Christ is "the Yea." His Kingdom is that of Redemption, by way of fulfilment and satisfaction. It recognises human nature in all the wealth of its infinite possibilities, refounds all these possibilities in the Divine Fatherhood out of which they spring, and, through the workings of grace, gives to them all both the law and the freedom of a harmonious and triumphant development. Within the Kingdom of Christ the filial character of man is being brought to full manifestation. Hence the gift of Christ meets the need of man at every point by dealing

with that which is central and determinative of the whole—the Fatherly-filial relationship. All true progress, when closely examined, will be found to be due to the impulse, open-eyed or dimly-groping, to secure the expression and satisfaction of the Divinely-filial under earthly conditions. Only the Kingdom of Christ can make progress living, effective and permanent by bringing to it, throughout its entire range, the strength and succour of the Divine Fatherhood conveyed through the realisation of Sonship. This Sonship contains and combines within itself at once the ideal, the energy, the vital impulse and the immanent law of which Christ's Kingdom, when fully manifested, will be the living and permanent expression.

In what relationship, then, does the Church of Christ stand to His Kingdom ? The answer most frequently made is that the Church is the appointed instrument by which the Kingdom is advanced, the means of its coming. This explanation contains an obvious and important element of truth, but it is insufficient and taken by itself misleading. For a mere instrument is external to that which it manufactures. Its operation is for the most part mechanical, and it is laid aside when its task is completed. A Kingdom that stands for fulfilled Sonship cannot be brought about by such external and, in the strict sense, accidental action ; nor can such life as that which is realised or realisable in the Church, be properly treated as a mere means of anything outside itself, however commanding and important. If the Church is to be the instrument of the Kingdom, the Kingdom being what it is, it must be something more.

Others identify the Kingdom with the Church of Christ, and in support of their contention call attention to the fact that whereas the Gospels are full of teaching about the Kingdom and make but scanty reference to the Church, it is the other way about with the Epistles of the New Testament. It is clear that Apostolic teaching treats the Church as being the immediate sphere of Christ's Kingship. According to the Epistle to the Ephesians the Church is the Body of Christ and He is its Head. Its members are brought by adoption to enjoy all the blessings of Divine Sonship, stand in vital relations to the Son as their "living Head," and in Him are in such fellowship with one another that they are in process of coming "unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." This is to say that the Church is a living organism, the development of which is by way of complete fellowship towards the perfect realisation and enjoyment of the Divine relationships in and for which it has its being. Hence the Church is by its nature and constitution equivalent to the Kingdom and manifests it in so far as the Kingdom itself has, as yet, been spiritually realised. Yet while this is true, it is not the whole truth. It must always be remembered that the Church, though a distinct organism and organisation, is not self-contained and cut off from the rest of mankind. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, once more, St. Paul describes the objective of his Apostolate as being "to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from all ages hath been hidden in God who

created all things." The content of this mystery is that "the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the Body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel." The Church is indeed "a kind of first fruits," and the very fact of its missionary calling and success shows that in it a gift of life and salvation is enjoyed of which all men are by their very nature capable. In other words the Church is the earnest and anticipation of redeemed mankind, which is to be gathered together into Christ's Kingdom by being brought to the enjoyment of those Divine relations of light and life and love into which believers have already entered by virtue of their restored and fulfilled Sonship. Hence there is the prospect of a threefold fulfilment—of Christ's Kingdom, of His Church as coming to partake of His fulness and thus made the means of ingathering and transforming mankind, and of mankind brought through the grace of Christ and the ministry of the Church to the full enjoyment of the life in the Father, without which man's nature perishes and his achievements fail. And these three are one. None is without the others. The Church in which Christ's Kingdom lives and has its prophetic witness is, on this basis, an instrument of the Kingdom, but only in so far as it is more than an instrument,—a living embodiment of the grace it conveys, by sharing its blessings with men who are divinely constituted to receive and enjoy them. Thus "the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened."

If all this be true the life of the Church is bound

up with unities that condition its whole life and character, its witness and its work. St. Paul bears testimony to this truth when he says: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all" (Eph. iv, 4, 5). These unities do more than surround and influence the Church; they penetrate to the inmost of its being. Indeed apart from them, still more if in conflict with them, it has no being, much less well-being, whatsoever. The Father from whom men derive their being, and to whom they are to be brought, is one and is the Father of all. The way to Him is one. Mankind which is to be brought to the one Father by the one Way, Christ Jesus, is one. Though fissured by distinctions of race and culture, all men are ideally one in the destination that is set before them and in the essential constitution of their nature which constrains them to seek this destination. The Church is the offspring of the Divine and Spiritual Reality to which it owes its birth. It is the first fruits of mankind. The source of its being is actually, the objective of its life and labour is potentially, one. The mission of the Church is to manifest the Divine and to effectuate the human unity. Nay, more, the Church manifests the unity of the Father and promotes the unity of mankind by means of a ministry of reconciliation, which as the activity of the "one Spirit" gives practical effect to our Lord's *atoning* work. Hence, for the fulfilment of this ministry, the Church must needs be drawn up into closest union with God the Father and with

His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and drawn out into closest union of sympathy and service with mankind. Mankind is destined through the ministry of the Church to be brought into unity of life with the one God and Father through the one Christ, and, as the consequence, into the unity of a common consummation which transcends, if it does not abolish, all human distinctions whatsoever. "There cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. iii, 11). How can a divided Church be the organ, the embodiment, the efficient cause of all these unities? How can such a divided Church fail to hinder the very object for which it exists? And in thus contradicting both the law and the purpose of its being, how can it avoid being in conflict with its Divine environment and, therefore, cutting off from itself those full measures of life and grace that are needful to its health and success?

The question, therefore, is, How can divisions realise, manifest, and serve unity? Must they not be, essentially as well as actually, "our *unhappy* divisions"? Unity is of the very essence of the spiritual world in which the Church is called to live and move and have its being. How then can it be well with the Church if the supreme law of its life be contradicted, or at best unfulfilled? Its fourfold task is to respond to and witness to the unity of God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; to win the world to fellowship with this Divine unity, and to transform it till it becomes one family in God. Surely it is a prime condition alike of full Christian experience, of faithful

prophetic witness, of successful evangelisation, and of the exercise of transforming influence, that the condition of the Church should be in full correspondence with the Reality in which it lives and to which it witnesses, that it should exhibit to mankind that unity to which all men are to be brought.

This necessity stands out in St. Paul's declaration, "There is *one Body* and one Spirit." It is impossible to evade its force. It must not only be confessed, but contended, that any division of the one Body of Christ must have been inconceivable to the Apostle; or if conceivable, must have appeared as a lapse from the catholic calling of the Church and as a transgression of the law of its spiritual constitution in Christ. At the same time the Apostle treats the full attainment of unity as the result, or at least the concomitant and mark of maturity; for the gift of the one yet manifold ministry to the Church is said to be "unto the building up of the body of Christ: *till we all attain* unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv, 12, 13). He speaks also of "each several building," fitly framed together (apparently the local churches), as *growing* "into a holy Temple in the Lord" (Eph. ii, 21). Catholic unity is, therefore, the immanent ideal of the Churches' life; but the full realisation of this ideal is in the future, and must be the product of all the forces that make for fellowship, completed in perfect faith and full knowledge of the Son of God.

It is at this point, however, that the first serious objection is raised. Cannot there be unity of spirit,

it is asked, without unity of body ? May not even the body which is one be a spiritual body consisting in heavenly relationships, fellowship, and functions, rather than a visible organisation ? To this it must be replied that this hypothesis simply reflects and justifies the existing state of things. It is untrue alike to the Source, to the goal, and therefore to the tendency of the Church's life. Let it be granted that the unity of the Church is spiritual and rests in the Divine relations into which believers are brought. Men are baptized " into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." It is only as they have their " fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ," that they " have fellowship one with another." Yet this very fact is a living force that constrains those of whom it is true, to seek bodily form and expression for this fellowship, in order that it may be completed, safeguarded, educated and made known. The vitality of the spiritual fellowship and its veracity, to say the least, vary directly with the desire to give corporate manifestation and enforcement to it as is the case with every other form of human fellowship and agreement. Unity, however spiritual its nature may be, cannot be maintained if abstract barriers are erected against its frank and full embodiment. Moreover the one life of the Spirit, being heavenly, universal, and catholic in its nature, cannot be developed to its perfection in national or sectional communities. All denominations—Roman, Eastern, Anglican, as well as Nonconformist—speak provincial dialects, which betray their lack of fulfilled catholicity. It is imperative that all these provincialisms should

be transcended, if the fulness of "truth, as truth is in Jesus," is to be reached. And this consummation can only be brought about in and through one communion, with its corporate organisation and life. Such catholicity as belongs to each denomination, be it more or less, can only be preserved in so far as it energises in the active pursuit of more. For this reason it was laid down at the outset that "*the promotion* of the corporate reunion of all branches of Christ's Church is essential to the advancement of His Kingdom."

It will, however, be asked, Have not the main divisions of Christ's Church been brought about in the interests of truth, and have they not, for this reason, been for the advancement of His Kingdom? To attempt a complete answer to this question would require a prolonged and difficult investigation, which would carry the subject beyond the scope of this essay. It may be agreed that certain elements of the Truth, that had either not been fully recognised hitherto or that had in process of time been obscured or perverted by error or cast into the background by over-assertion of other of its elements, have been at the heart of many great movements which have broken up the corporate unity of Christ's Church. It may also be agreed that, in all the circumstances, the gains that have thus accrued to Christendom could not have been attained without the creation, for the time being, of these divisions. And yet it may be contended with equal justice that while these divisions, owing to human sinfulness and imperfection, were inevitable, they were not essentially bound up

with the triumph of the Truth, but that, on the contrary, they were to the detriment of the Truth, alike in its recognition, its presentation, and its general acceptance. This may even be held to be the case in regard to the very elements of the truth in behalf of which the divisions took place. This is only to admit that divisions have operated in the Church as wars have operated in human history. Great gains have been won and are now being won for humanity through the agency or at the cost of warfare. Yet this fact does not prevent us from condemning war in itself as ultimately due to evil and not to good, as abating the good which it may eventually bring to pass, and, therefore, as calling for a concerted effort to make it impossible for all time to come. All this may be admitted without equalising the blame for the outbreak of any particular war, and without destroying the relative justification of those who, under existing conditions, have taken up arms to resist aggression upon the vital interests of mankind. In the same way it may be held that victories have been won for truth at the cost of causing divisions within the Church of Christ, without denying that these divisions have been evil in themselves, and certainly without admitting that because they may have been inevitable they should therefore be permanent. On the contrary, honest and enlightened men are coming to perceive that the sinfulness, imperfection, and limitations which made these divisions inevitable, set their mark for evil upon the apprehension of the very truths in behalf of which they were caused; and that the only way to bring these truths to final

expression and full acceptance, is to secure for them their rightful place in such a larger synthesis as can only be attained through the restoration of full communion in the unity of perfected catholicity. Hence reunion is essential to the ultimate triumph of the Faith—as fully apprehended truth—even though divisions have been used, or overruled, for its temporary advancement.

It will be objected from certain quarters still more strongly, that freedom is essential to the advancement of Christ's Kingdom, and that reunion would probably be brought about to the detriment of freedom in the present and certainly to its risk in the future. Freedom is not merely a blessing in itself to those who enjoy it, but its maintenance is all-important to the advancement of a kingdom which comes by way of the realisation of spiritual realities and relationships. Such realisation must be, in its very nature, unceasingly progressive. To achieve unity at the expense of freedom would, therefore, cut the nerve of spiritual progress. Faith, it will be urged, is by its nature, as shown by its history, intractable. "The wind bloweth where it listeth . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The Kingdom itself, also, just because it consists in the full experience of spiritual relationships, is too intangible in its nature and too incalculable in its workings to be confined within any human organisation. Thus to confine it, is to weaken and hamper its creative forces; to limit these forces by the past instead of directing them by the ideal of the future. The tendency of all societies, it is held, however progressive may have been their original aims, is to become

stereotyped. They harden themselves upon the experience of the past, organise themselves on its basis, lose plasticity and *élan vital*, and thus eventually become obsolete. This process has again and again injured the Church. "Liberty of prophesying" has been destroyed, growth has been checked, and power of adaptation has failed. The Church has lost its exuberant vitality and become a decaying institution, severed from its sources of life both in God and man. In so far as it has been saved from this fate, or as the process has been delayed, this salutary result has been produced by the actions and reactions of freedom, issuing frequently in revolt. What has been true of the past will be equally true of the future. Hence to aim at corporate reunion is a mistaken policy all along the line. It disregards the normal action of faith, the most personal and unfettered of all energies. It misunderstands the nature of Christ's Kingdom, and especially it overlooks the all-important consideration that the triumph of the Kingdom must be brought about alternately by the help and at the cost of the organised institution, the Church, which bears witness to but is subordinate to it. On this showing the divisions of the Church *are*, and its destruction *may become*, essential to the advancement of Christ's Kingdom. That it may increase, the Church must decrease. The spirit of self-sacrifice in the Church must be shown by its acceptance of this tragic destination. To seek to escape it will only result in the Church magnifying itself at the expense of the Kingdom, the Truth, mankind, and even Christ. To quote the pregnant saying of Coleridge, "He who begins by loving

Christianity better than Truth will proceed by loving his own sect or Church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all." This is a truly formidable representation; it contains important elements of truth and forewarns us of very real dangers. The reminder is akin to that which is given by those who hold up the Holy Alliance as a warning to those who are at present promoting the establishment of a League of Nations. Yet in both cases the reasons for going forward are so constraining that dangers should not daunt us, and that the history of the past should be used, not as a deterrent, but as enabling us to find a way of obviating these dangers for the future. It is true that faith is personal; that it takes up into itself Reason, Conscience, Sentiment and Habit, as the impregnable buttresses of its freedom. Yet just because faith is personal, it is essentially social, not individualist. It is self-communicative and lives by sharing and not in isolation. Moreover, the collective witness of the Church, its authoritative standards, are the monuments of the faith and freedom of the past; to be respected by all true faith, which may enlarge but should not destroy the great inheritance it has received. The watchword of faith and prophecy should be, "other men laboured and ye are entered into their labours." Hence both the progressive and the conservative interests of faith are alike essential to its perfecting, and should be brought into full harmony of living development. Furthermore it is true that as the coming of the Kingdom is by means of a living process involving large and difficult adjustments to a Divine

and human environment, the former of which is progressive in its revelation and the latter ever-changing in its manifestations, therefore this process often upsets an existing equilibrium that it may move forward, through this unsettlement, to a larger and more commanding stability. From the time of the Reformation, to go no farther back, the Church has been passing through a period of great unsettlement. But the signs are being multiplied that the living movement is advancing towards a fresh stabilisation, in which all the vital energies that are at work will and should co-operate to produce a larger and fairer order, in which each several contribution should enlarge the life and increase the well-being of the whole, in the truth and freedom of love. This process of reunion carries forward within it new and more effective means of combining Truth, Freedom, and Fellowship in unity, than had been enjoyed in the past. The Church, like the nations, must make the great venture, counting upon the immanent reason and power that are contained in the living movement. It is not for us to predict whether the full and final catholicity will be attained by this movement, or whether, once more, it may be broken up by the inability of imperfect men to apprehend the Truth in all its fulness and to meet the needs of man in all their variety. It must suffice for us to perceive that ultimate unity must needs be of the purpose of God; that it is inherent in Christ—in the gift of His salvation and the nature of His Kingdom; that the cause of Truth is being damaged at present through the lack of it, that loyalty and love constrain us to seek it,

The very recognition of all this will enable the Church of the future to safeguard truth and foster freedom through unity, in a way and to a degree that have been beyond the reach and the resources of the past.

It is only from the higher standpoint which regards Christ's Kingdom as consisting in and energising for the realisation of Divine relationships with mankind that the urgent needs of the secular situation can be surveyed. It will suffice to glance at international relations, world-evangelisation, moral problems and social needs, in order to see that the promotion of reunion is essential to the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in regard to all these.

1. In the sphere of international relations, the highest hopes and the most strenuous endeavours of the best men in every nation are being directed to the establishment of a League of Nations, which shall not only abolish the causes and prevent the outbreak of war for the future, but shall do so by establishing a new fellowship between the peoples. The Churches have rightly welcomed this new ideal and are seeking to bring it within the range of practical politics.

Yet how shall a divided Church witness effectually to a united brotherhood of mankind? How shall such a Church exhort the nations to compose their differences, while it tolerates its own? How shall the Church summon the nations to the great venture of transcending the organised traditions of the past and creating a new order, while it is too supine or too cowardly to attempt any such enterprise for itself, although the very law of its being and the spring of its history point towards the need and the success

of such an effort? Once more, how can the Church denounce the pride, the self-sufficiency, and the discordant ambitions that stand between the nations and the final order of peace, when exactly these same vices, in a subtler form, are a fatal obstacle to its own unity?

Nor is this all. The statesmen of the world are casting about to seek sanctions for a League of Peace. An international military force and an economic weapon against aggression are the arms by which it is to be upheld. Yet these are plainly insufficient and will certainly prove futile, unless the spirit of unity and brotherhood becomes so strong that the use of these weapons becomes needless or that there may be the collective will to use them should they unhappily be needed. Whence is the creative energy, the sustaining strength, and the driving force of the new order to come? Should it not be due to a close alliance between the Church and the manhood and womanhood of the world? If this alliance is to be brought about in its perfection, the Church must be so far united as to speak with one voice, act with one arm, and exert the influence of one Catholic consciousness that reveals the presence and power of the Prince of Peace.

2. Similar considerations should arise as Christians set about the evangelisation of mankind. Our divisions, though their effects are mitigated by the good sense and good feeling of missionaries as well as by the statesmanship of the societies that are behind them, are a grievous hindrance to the advancement of Christ's Kingdom. And this not merely within the range of practical endeavour but in the higher realm of Christian

life. Why should the peoples of India, China, and Africa be expected either now or eventually to face and fight their way through the tangled history of Western Christendom? Why should they be so instructed that the provincialisms of the West—so utterly alien from them and so largely accidental in themselves—should be set as strange problems before their mind and eventually as obstacles to their progress? Why should their Catholic fellowship be destroyed at the start because their Churches are founded upon our lack of such fellowship? The hope of winning new kingdoms for Christ should inspire us with the hope, the courage, and the patient determination to transform the old by the spirit of unity.

3. So with regard to the moral interests of mankind, endangered by old sources of weakness and by the new perils of changing international and social conditions. The Church must apply itself to ascertaining the mind and wielding the power of Christ in regard to all these perplexing problems. It must also be able to bring its whole force instantly to bear upon any point of the far-flung line that is threatened. And how can all this be done successfully except by means of complete and organised unity?

4. Finally, the task of social reconstruction and progress is laid upon the nation. The peoples demand their full inheritance of human well-being. The sacrifices of the war must be made good in the universal well-being of the multitudes, especially of those who have hitherto been rather the victims or the instruments than the heirs of our civilisation. The Promised Land cannot be entered or enjoyed by means of Might,

but only by Right and Brotherly Love. The heroic self-sacrifice of the war must be the foundation of the peace and the spirit by which its fruits are to be nurtured and garnered. The Church is the commissioned leader in this great task. The ministry of the Church extends beyond its borders. It includes the Prophetic witness to the values of Christ's Kingdom in every realm of life, the Priestly office that brings about the sanctifying of these values in the character and conduct of men, the Kingly authority that safeguards these values in the laws and customs of nations. Yet the credentials of the Church are rejected and its ministry neglected because "our unhappy divisions" prevent us from having one mind, speaking with one voice, and manifesting the glory of a self-sacrifice that has attained its full vigour by triumphing over the most insidious forms of faction and self-seeking.

Hence whether we consider the inmost nature or the practical demands of Christ's Kingdom, the conclusion that it can only be advanced by the promotion of reunion rests upon reasons of overwhelming strength. The Cause of Christ is at stake. It can only be saved by the answer of His own prayer "that they may all be one: even as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me."

EVANGELICALISM AND ITS REVIVAL

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SYNOPSIS

1. Parallel in modern Evangelical History.

2. Evangelicalism described : scriptural—historic—catholic.

a. Standing itself amidst other types of Christian thought upon the Catholic foundation, it recognises with them

1. The corporate aspect of Christian Life :
2. The devout and purposeful use of the Sacraments :
3. The Call and Commission, under the Lord, of the Church's Ministry.

b. Its *differentia* lies largely in the *place and proportion* which it gives to common Christian tenets.

1. Church membership is second in order to membership in Christ.
2. Sacraments are "efficacious" seals and signs, not the things themselves sealed or signified.
3. Constitutional Episcopacy is no exclusive "fact of revelation," when seen in the light of the divine impartiality of spiritual bessing.

3. Such historical Evangelicalism, revived in spiritual power, may well prove a great determining factor in English religious Reunion. It has a vital message for to-day, having in view the penetration for Christ of the masses of our people. Past and weighty movements of the Spirit of God resulted in lives such as those of Shaftesbury and Wilberforce. Our need of the same powers and lives to-day, not mechanically repeated, but sprung from the same source for the same ends.

4. The experiences of Durham Diocese only illustrate the need for a revival of prophetic power through the clear vision of the Lord Jesus Christ (for it is the seer who is, as ever, the prophet) and the "completeness" of the Christian in Him. There is continual need both of warning and of hope in the delivery of the "prophet's" message.

EVANGELICALISM AND ITS REVIVAL

I

WITHIN the first few months of my ministerial life, more than fifty years ago, I was talking with a friend some years senior to myself, a great admiration of mine as man, Christian, and missionary, about the then state of religion, particularly within the English Church. Very vivid in my memory is the seriousness with which he quoted from another common friend, his *alter ego* in moral and mental elevation, the remark that "the Evangelical school, our school, is dying of exinanition."

I recall the incident only for a purpose germane to this chapter. It would be interesting to recount the phenomena of that time which could suggest or excuse the remark. But this would be a long labour, and not wholly to the point. I repeat that quotation of long ago simply to emphasise two remarks. The words, which certainly had at least some verisimilitude, may first remind us that Evangelicalism, like other schools and types, has had its ebb-tides of vitality and influence. And the experiences of the half-century which has passed since that colloquy contain on the other hand ample encouragement, during any other disheartening time, for patience, hope, and courage.

Not long after 1867, the year in question, amidst an abundance of opposing or crossing circumstances, there came on a revival of Evangelicalism, with results, so I see them, of large benefit, far beyond any limits of a school. The seventies of last century were a decade formidable with many aggressions of naturalistic thought. But they also witnessed the first great enterprise of Moody in this country—the prophet Moody, as a great High Churchman called him to me—when truly it was as if "blessing was in the air," blessing felt in all schools of all British Churches, but notably on the Evangelical side of the Church of England. And in the seventies also, quite independently, arose the spiritual movement which connects itself with Keswick. That movement, like the other, knew no ecclesiastical limitations, though its English pioneer, Harford-Battersby, was a vicar and canon, experienced and revered. It attracted and uplifted numberless souls, those of saintly High Churchmen among them. And beyond a doubt one great result of it has been to reinforce with new life the message-work of the old Gospel, making ancient watchwords only the more powerful by connecting them vitally with watchwords also old as the Apostles, but widely forgotten. And the result, under God, of Moody on the one hand and of Keswick on the other was indeed a powerful revival of the Evangelical school, in English Christendom at large, and not least in the Church of England.

And that revival—what line upon the whole did it take, notably in the eighties and nineties? Not that of party organisation, God be thanked; not that of a growth of political influence; there was no

new epoch of "Palmerston bishops." No, the symptoms of revival were worthier of Christ than these. Eminent among them was an almost new birth of the missionary spirit. Can any man who remembers the Cambridge of those decades fail to recall, almost with awe, the depth and tone of the missionary impulse among the students? The teacher's and counsellor's task then was not to stimulate but to guide, to enjoin full reflection, to remind the ardent soul of the claims of the work of God *at home*. And the work at home (it is always thus, I think, when a missionary high-tide is flowing) did not lose, but gain. Noble young hearts, debarred from Africa, India, or China, by health, by clear duty, threw themselves in a fine spirit of "life abundant," steadfast and sacrificial, into work and witness at home.

The great Student Movement dates, as we all know, from that period. Ultimately, under God, it owes its being to a source definitely and wholly spiritual—to the revival of Evangelical life and conviction which followed the anxious time when my old friend spoke so sorrowfully about "exinanition."

For myself the mere retelling of this story of ebb and then of flow is a spiritual help, as I address myself to some thoughts on the position and possibilities of to-day. It animates thought with the consciousness of Christ, Christ latent but ever living, Christ the supreme and abiding guarantee to His disciples that in Him the future, whatever the aspect of the present, is theirs. Not for the individual only but for the believing community it is true for ever: "Because I live, ye shall live also." So, on purpose to under-

stand better, and meet better, to-day and to-morrow, "we will remember" *yesterday*—"the years of the right hand of the Most High."

II

I come now more directly to my theme. In a very simple way something shall be said first about Evangelicalism, then about its present need of revival, and about the lines and spirit which, as far as my vision reaches, should characterise such revival in our time. Something will be suggested in due place about the bearing of the whole matter upon Reunion.

How shall I try, not to define, which is hardly possible, but to describe, Evangelicalism? For the purposes of this chapter, and, so I think, of this book, it may be described as a form of Christian belief which in the first place embraces and cherishes, at the basis of all which is distinctive in it, the great tenets of orthodoxy, scriptural, and historically catholic. It holds fast with worshipping faith the truth of the Triune Godhead, living for ever with the supreme inner life of infinite mutual Love; and the Incarnation of the Son of God as Son of Man, unique Person, at once eternal and historical, man's Author, Prototype, Exemplar, Head, Brother, Sovereign, God; and the self-sacrificial Propitiation for the guilt of man, wrought and finished, and crowned in Resurrection, by this Lord Jesus Christ in His death, His peace-making Atonement—which is in fact Himself, offered for us before the infinite Holiness, Lawgiver for law-breakers, King for rebels, Just for unjust, Head for

race, Saviour for sinner; and the personal love and power of the Divine Spirit, Regenerator, Converter, Sanctifier, Revealer of the hidden glory of Christ to the soul, Breath of life in the believing Community.

Upon this primeval and perpetual basis Evangelicalism, in the sense of this chapter, rests, with all the weight of a belief which sees and feels its vast outlines revealed articulately in the Bible, that book whose structure, manifold and one, is enough to affirm its superhuman origin and purpose, and to which the Lord taught us to turn, amidst a thousand mysteries and questions, with the watchword, "It is written." And it finds the Biblical witness not overruled but crossed and confirmed by the vast co-ordinate of the witness of the believing Church, the experience of historical and living Christendom, the faith and love of the saints. It finds the central *differentia* of Christianity—Incarnate God, victorious through death for man's pardon, and, in risen and endless life, for man's life—present in the very first certainties of the Church. It finds this verified as a "sober certainty of waking bliss" by the moral perfectness of the character, equally sane and heavenly, which sprang, new and full-grown, out of the fact of Christ. And it claims to rest the all of faith and hope upon this Thing *known*, amidst all the innumerable things *unknown* which may ever seem to collide or strike across it.

What, meanwhile, may be stated as the *differentia* of Evangelicalism, as it presents itself standing, amidst other types of Christian thought, upon the catholic foundation? With some of those other types it has a great deal in common; not least with

what may be called the High Anglican type, especially as that type appears in its older and classical period, the seventeenth century. It fosters, at least it is fully propitious towards, a reverential estimate of the corporate aspect of Christian life. Individual Evangelicals may belittle or even ignore that aspect. But the Evangelical principle is in perfect accord with what Scripture, reason, and experience all emphasise, the high, nay the vital, importance of organised and ordered cohesion and fellowship, alike for the full development of the personal life in grace and, very conspicuously, for the efficiency of the Christian force for the service of the world and the campaign of the Gospel. Within Evangelical borders, as all men know, there are great differences of thought and of tradition as to laws of common order. But upon the *principle* of common order the Presbyterian and the Methodist, for example, are not less assured than the Anglican, to this extent at least, that to the full benefit of the member the body is owned to be vastly important, and that the body is meant to be such as to be not only, though it is primarily, an ideal, but to be the working organ of co-operative labour and service in man's world.

The Evangelical principle again amply and earnestly embraces a reverential regard for the Sacraments of the Gospel and a devout and purposeful use of them. Important exceptions can be quoted, no doubt; but they are exceptions. Baptism is a thing of profound concern to the Baptist, to speak of him only. The Holy Communion, from some great aspects, is an ordinance of unspeakable solemnity to the devout

Presbyterian. I should suppose that (putting aside the quite special problem of the baptism of the children of the Church) there is little if not nothing in the Anglican Articles upon the holy Sacraments, or in the questions and answers upon them in the Anglican Catechism, which would collide in principle with the mind of orthodox Nonconformity, upon the whole.

Am I wrong in saying nearly the same on the subject of Ordination and the Christian Pastorate? Conspicuous and important differences exist, under the principle. But the principle, I think, commands wide and reverent adherence—that the normal ministry of Word and Ordinance needs normally the commission, under the Lord, of the Church. Supremely, the call is His, not the individual's mere choice, not the merely administrative arrangement of the Community. But for the great purposes of verification, order, and continuity, the subordinate call and commission of the Church is a normal and sacred requisite.

What then, to repeat the question, may we state as the *differentia* of Evangelicalism? I venture to reply by saying that it lies, greatly any wise, in *the place and proportion* which it gives to common Christian tenets. Let me explain myself as briefly as possible. It reverently holds to the dignity and to the normal necessity of Church membership and order. But it declines to put that belief above, or in the way of, the profound fact of the direct relation of the individual to God, spirit to Spirit; the normal necessity, in order to the presence and working of the gracious Life of God in the person, of personal repentance and faith;

and again, an entirely free access to the very presence and heart of the Father, secured in Christ, our Head, Redeemer, Mediator, for "every one that believeth"; nothing, literally nothing, between, except Him who is one with the Father and one with the man. Great is the work of the Church, rightly applied and used, in assisting that access, and in fostering its results. But to the access itself the one thing needful is a trusted Christ. And without a trusted Christ at the heart of all else, the Church's "fostering" will be vain.

The Sacraments again are reverently used. But the mental and spiritual difference between the signs—however holy, however divinely appointed, however greatly assistant to faith—and the things signified, is not only admitted but carefully inculcated. Not only is the "is," in the words of the Lord at the Institution, interpreted reasonably—which does by no means mean unreverently; but it is held that the glory of the promised presence of the Christ with His own, the presence of the full Christ, is everywhere and always with the faithful, and not at the Eucharistic Table only in any special limitation, and that the feeding and feast upon His Body given and His Blood shed is similarly always and everywhere, for the true disciple. The sacramental action is of profound assistance, so it be done in spirit and in truth, but it is not ever the absolute requisite.

Probably most thoughtful Evangelicals would agree, essentially, in that estimate of the holy Sacraments which finds their special and grandly sacred "reason" in their character as divine Seals upon the eternal Covenant. In symbolism divinely chosen, and so of divine

value, they embody the primal truths of the New Life; its natal cause in the Spirit's vital power and cleansing; its growth, and its strength for service, its union with the common life of the living body, in the Lord Christ Jesus, once sacrificed for our sins, now living to be our life. So the Sacraments take in the whole Gospel in their significance, and the whole Christian life in their scope of influence. They seal the Covenant, to penitent faith, with the Great Seal of Heaven. But the Covenant is larger than its Seals. Its blood-bought wealth, for the believer, is everywhere and always the same. He has everywhere and always the life of the new Birth. He has everywhere and always the whole Presence of his Lord, and the manna and the wine of Heaven in His finished Sacrifice and ever indwelling Life. He lives upon that Sustenance moment by moment, and faith is his organ of reception. In other words, he lives by a continually trusted Christ, sacrificed for him, living in him, ruling over him.

To state the matter under other terms: the holy Sacraments, as historical theology knows, because of their intense connection with the spiritual things they signify, have, in all ages and in widely differing "schools," been freely spoken of as if they were the Things. This is a phenomenon of common human speech, in any case where picture, or emblem, or warrant of possession, is concerned. But we hold, in the light of Scripture and of the experience of spiritual life, personal and common, that the Sacraments and the Things signified are no more identical than is, for example, a title-deed identical with the house or land which it "conveys." The series of sacramental

occasions in the Christian's life is one thing. The actual story of his new birth and life is another.

The sacred Ministry is reverenced by the Evangelical as quite primeval in the Church as to its principle, and of incalculable value for the transmission of teaching and witness, the protection of reverent and efficient order, and the continuity of practical common life. But it is not held by him to be an intermediating condition to the full contact of man with God in Christ. He does not see it revealed (and he thinks that a very explicit revelation would be proper to the case) that for such a contact the intervention of a mortal man in priest's orders is a requisite ; a requisite which would make the Christian believer's access a matter far more restrained, far more dependent upon the aid of fellow-mortals, than was that, let us say, of the Psalmists under the Old Law.

As to the type and rule of ministerial succession, it may be adequate here to say that Evangelical Churchmen, as a body, would probably agree with the greatest Anglicans of the seventeenth century (I may name Andrewes, Hall, Cosin, and Laud himself) in holding that a constitutional Episcopacy comes down from apostolic times, and makes powerfully, so it be wisely and godly administered, for the *well-being* of the Church, but that it is not vital to its *being*. I think they would affirm that such a vital character cannot be shown to be revealed, and that the divine impartiality of spiritual blessing which appears, on the whole, in history, where, under varying types of ministry, the glory of Christ is set forth, speaks powerfully for a guarded and modest belief in the matter.

A great number of non-Anglican Evangelicals on the other hand would probably allow that in a temperate Episcopacy, with large elasticity of detail, a harmony may, after all, best be found between freedom and authority, between the full rights of the Christian people and the leadership of the ministry.

III

Thus, briefly and as in a sketch, I have attempted to indicate the distinctive Evangelical attitude, in a general sense, on some great matters of historical controversy. Am I wrong in saying that, if such a review is not altogether mistaken, it strongly suggests the hope that historical Evangelicalism may, if it revives in spiritual power, prove a potent factor in English religious reunion? I am well aware, often with a great anxiety, of the complex conditions which beset such reunion. When the problem tries to deal with even relatively narrow areas, delimited by differing traditions of Christian ministry, it can easily daunt hopes which have not behind them a steady faith in the purposes for His Christendom of the Lord of peace and order. But granted such a faith, may we not work with a hope which illuminates labour? Of one thing I feel reverently sure. Grant on the one hand, on all the sides concerned, an estimate of differences and agreements sobered and softened by history. Grant on the other a great revival in the same minds of the glory of the New Covenant and its message, the splendour and wonder of the atoning Cross, say rather of the Crucified, our Propitiation and our Life, and of

the love and power of the Heavenly Spirit, a revival which shall give to the Church a generation of leaders who are prophets because they really are, by grace, seers. Then we shall be on the way to much more than a union of hearts only, precious, indispensable, as that will be. We shall, as by an instinctive movement, "condescend together," to use an old phrase, in a practical and operative union which too often has seemed only a dream, but which will become a waking experience then.

As I leave this large part of my subject-matter, let me make one personal remark. In a long experience as a preacher, and also as a teacher, as one who little loves disputation, yet has had not seldom to try to assert definite convictions, I have sometimes asked myself why I am an Evangelical. It has been my happiness, not least in my later years, to know and to love, as friends in Christ, holy men of other types and schools, and to see with reverence their Lord's likeness in the countenance of their lives. Why do I not quite forget our differences, or at least say that they are altogether negligible? These men are, beyond shadow of question, at least as much Christ's own as I can dare to think myself. From their example, from their words, sometimes from words definitely shaped by their distinctive tenets, I have often received exhortation and edification. Why do I not, *sans phrase*, "symbolise" with them out and out? Or why, at the least, do I not forbear to write, as I am writing now, about our differences? For many years, when thus questioning myself, I have found my answer in the reflection (it is as definite now "as in my Christian

spring,") that the beliefs which are commonly called Evangelical, thoughtfully and temperately stated, the beliefs which may fairly be said to be common to the school (which of course has its internal varieties of type in detail), accord better than those of other schools, *especially in proportion and emphasis,* with the New Testament standard. It seems to me that, in the Book which is above every book, and to which my Church definitely assigns final authority in matters of faith, tenets emphasised with primary earnestness by the school, call it sacerdotal, which includes some revered friends of mine, are, to say the least, not prominent. And I think that I do see prominent there, alike in statement and in proportion of statements, the tenets which are most characteristic of Evangelical belief.

I wish to speak thus with all humbleness and godly fear. I recollect that I have lived long, and that years are supposed to harden the receptivity of the mind and to narrow its ken. But years have also a power to moderate the spirit, and to open to new sympathies the soul, taught by the work, the affections, and the griefs of life. So I do not think that the abiding and indeed deepening of the conviction thus stated is nothing better than the obscurantism of a senior. It connects itself in the consciousness rather with life, love, and hope than with antagonism. Certainly it leaves the heart more than ever sensitive against the spirit and the accent of the partisan.

IV

In conclusion I come to some reflections, detached from the previous matter in form, but by no means in purpose, upon the message and ministry of a revived Evangelicalism in our day, *especially in view of the penetration for Christ of the masses of our people.*

Few will deny the present need of a strong and deeply-working Revival. I use the word in a large sense. It often denotes a local and limited spiritual movement, perhaps prepared for, almost engineered, by special methods, and sometimes pathetically evanescent. A worthier reference of the word is to great and phenomenal waves, or tides, of spiritual motion, perhaps attended by abnormal manifestations of mingled physical and psychical exaltation. Such were some moments of the Methodist upheaval of the eighteenth century, a time of new life grandly and historically beneficial as a whole. Such was "the Revival," in the States, in Ulster, in parts of England, about sixty years ago, a time within my vivid recollection. Such, to quote the latest prominent example, was the Welsh Revival of 1904. But the word is larger even than such phenomenal times would make it. As I think of the need of revival now, and of what may be the answer to the cry for it, I think of motions of the Spirit of God which may, or may not, include phenomena obviously abnormal, great agitations, personal or of multitudes. But I think on the one hand of the certain fact that, as regards the holy work of individual salvation, conversions (I need not labour over a defini-

tion of conversion) are relatively rare, compared with the experiences of, say, thirty and forty years ago; that what we all know as the unworldly life, the life of "separation" from common secular ideals, a separation not pharisaical and self-satisfied, but loving and devoted, is far less common than it was about that time, and in times before it; that the impact of spiritual religion upon the general life around, which at some epochs has been great (as in the early Methodist age, for example, and in more than one later time, here and in America), is feeble. Spiritual religion, in its evangelical type, told powerfully on "the world" through the witness to the Gospel borne by a Wilberforce, for example, in his "Practical View," taken along with his weight of social and political influence, and with his grand social service for the slaves; and again through a Shaftesbury's combination of a militant spirit of indomitable devotion to the victims of the factory system, with his open and ardent confession of Christ as his all. And Wilberforce and Shaftesbury were but the grand leading examples of noble generations of Christian men and women, who lived, known or obscure, a full life of witness and service, all alive with the fire and breath of personal salvation;

> Sure of their Master's truth, sure to succeed,
> And well content to suffer and to bleed—

whether the blood were literal, as sometimes in the mission-field, or just the stream shed from a suffering soul of love. The pulpit, as my memory of long years testifies, was a great power in those days, whether it meant the regular pastoral ministry in church or

chapel, or the "open air," or the theatre-service, or the children's mission, or again the message given in the Keswick tent and such like assemblies for the simplest purposes of a deepened life in God, always with a view to a more sacrificial service of man in His name. The Christian home, in cases innumerable, was the genuine nursery of a believing and serving generation, where parents, intent on the idea of the converted life, so lived it before their children as to give a prevailing power to their "nurture and admonition in the Lord," and so that the children knew better and better, as they grew up and thought, what was their parents' faith, and how their dearest ambition for them was a life lived for the glory of God and the service of others.

Now I do not want to sound a note of despondency, or to indulge in that least profitable and least seemly of utterances, the scolding of fellow-Christians. But I do feel constrained, with my life's retrospect and present outlook in my mind, to say with humbleness that we need to pray, to watch, and to prepare our hearts, for a deep and grandly operative Revival in view of the present of Evangelical life and achievement compared with the past. "Though it tarry, wait for it," remembering its one possible living Source and Cause. When it comes it will not repeat the past mechanically. History repeats itself. Never, to be sure, does it do so exactly. But in the depth of things there must, there will, be a grand affinity between one true revival and another. All revival of witness, and of work done in the power of witness, must for ever—unless we invent an alien thing and call it the Gospel—have

the Eternal Spirit for its ultimate Worker and the Lord Jesus Christ, for us, in us, over us, for its matter, its secret, its inexhaustible and all-operative theme.

V

For nearly seventeen years now I have served, as unworthy "first of equals" among my pastoral brethren, in one of the great typical regions of modern English industrial life. I may claim to know something about the men and women of Durham, in their "pit-villages," their seaside and riverside workshops, their fields and moors, not to speak of many a cultured home. With brotherly kindness I have been made a friend by the clergy. And I have good cause to value the generous neighbourliness of numberless non-Anglicans, ministers and people. A Bishop of Durham is forced constantly to think, with thought warmed and quickened by personal contacts, about the social and industrial problems of our critical and pregnant time. He can well understand the temptation felt by many noble Christian souls to make the study of such problems almost the whole calling, and the solution of them, if it can be found, almost the whole Gospel. But more than ever I am sure that still, and for ever, till the Lord's Return sums up this æon, nothing, no, nothing can take the place of the Gospel of the Grace of God as the inmost answer to the unrest and the hunger of man, who, whatever else he is, however otherwise he is related, is a sinner, a sufferer, and a mortal. The application of the Gospel varies in detail, varies in

nuances past all classification, with the innumerable variations of circumstance. But it is itself one and eternal. And our supreme concern, I speak for the moment to my fellow-ministers of all communions, is so to see it, so to be the Lord's *seers* of Himself, by His Spirit, that we may be indeed the Lord's *prophets*; having Him, "first, last, midst, and without end," for our golden "burthen."

It has lately been my duty to invite around me a series of groups of my brethren of the Durham clergy, and affectionately to lay upon them some appeals about our message and our message-bearing, which I humbly think the Chief Shepherd has laid on me. Without presumption I may conclude this chapter with a brief summary, as if it were a quotation, or notes written afterwards, of these appeals. They were all given with a view to working and watching for a Revival in the Church, in order to the blessing of the world.

"The supreme present need, my Brethren, is a revival of prophetic power in the ministers of the Word. This may or may not mean eloquence; very likely it will not mean it. But it means vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, God-given vision, given to seekers; vision of Him in His glory, His finished work, His perpetual working, first for our inmost selves; Christ seen in the glass of His Word, made real by the mighty grace of His Spirit. The seer of that vision *must* be a prophet. He may be slow of speech, like Moses. But his speech will be the speech of one who knows the secret of the Most High, and comes with it to living men. To such a man they will listen, now as much as ever.

He who knows the Lord Jesus Christ, and knows and understands the human heart, shall not speak to bare walls.

"We must preach a *great* salvation, great in its deliverance from sin's guilt, great in its emancipation from sin's power. We are, in Christ, 'qualified to be agents of the New Covenant' (2 Cor. iii, 6). And we know what the New Covenant is. It is the divine engagement, surer than the foundations of the mountains, to meet the suppliant with a grand and gracious amnesty, and also with a Spirit-wrought transfiguration of the will: 'I will write' (it is the finger of God) 'my laws in their hearts; *for* their sins I will remember no more' (Heb. viii, 10, 12; from Jer. xxxi, 31, 33, 34). Of that wonderful Covenant, the Cup of the Communion is the Lord's own Seal, as its terms are written in His Blood (Luke xxii, 20). Let your call to be its 'agents' sink into your souls. Then you will find life much too short to unfold its glory, its 'greatness,' to men and women around you. It will meet all their need, and overflow.

"And we must preach it, or rather Him in Whom it lives and moves, not only with persuasion and welcome. We must not be afraid to warn. '*How shall we escape if we neglect* so great salvation?' The modern pulpit has almost forgotten the accent of warning. The Gospel has too often been allowed to seem a thing to be taken or left; highly beneficial if taken, but if left—well, God is merciful. But the Lord did not preach so. 'Strait is the way to life, and few find it; the broad road, where many walk,

leads' not to a privation merely, but 'to destruction.' Warning is wholly different from chiding. It is grave exceedingly; it is deeply loving; it is the utterance of a pastoral soul which has itself been warned, and has itself 'fled for refuge.' But it will mean a great peril, from which only the great Refuge saves. The lack of the warning note in our message has much to do with its lack of power. The arrow needs a naked point—only the point must be dipt in love.

"We need again, with the note of greatness of offered grace, and greatness of peril, to preach a great and heavenly hope, 'an inheritance incorruptible, reserved in heaven'; the radiant prospect of a deathless future in the unveiled presence of God and the Lamb; an existence in which every sort of good that can be immortal will meet in an unimaginable experience; in which the Blessed, quite holy, quite happy, quite inseparable for ever, will spend their bliss in infinitely genuine works and services for their Lord; doing the Master's will, deep in the Master's joy. Very far too much has the hope of glory dropt out of our preaching, alike the 'intermediate glory'—'with Christ, far better'—and the final Heaven. But in the New Testament this comes in everywhere. 'In this present world,' with its intense realities of love and duty, yes; but also always 'looking for that blessed hope,' the Return, the longed-for Coming, and the eternal bliss to follow.

"And all this, true to the Scriptural example again, is to be unfolded with perpetual application to 'this present world,' this now present æon, 'our own

generation,' the sphere of love, duty, service, which precisely to-day lies about us ; the call to live now, in God, for man. It may mean perhaps, as for the Frys and Shaftesburys, some great social work, with its toils and sufferings involved. It may mean, as for Catherine Marsh, a life literally spent upon the quest of souls. It may mean the missionary sacrifice of a Paton, a Chalmers, a Patteson, or a Hannington. But for most people it will mean fidelity in love to the will of God in the commonest things of common life, the ceaseless preference of duties to rights, of serving to being served, for the sake of the self-sacrificing Lord of the great salvation."

I think we shall yet see a noble Revival of Gospel power, sane, operative, beautiful, divine. It will come when our English Christendom, spiritually and openly co-operant, addresses itself anew, above all in the persons of its Pastors, to the work of the Lord in time, filled with the powers, with the awe, and with the hopes of the Coming, and of immortality.

UNITY AND THEOLOGY

A LIBERAL EVANGELICALISM THE TRUE CATHOLICISM

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SYNOPSIS

I. Sympathetic aspirations for Reunion must rest on a foundation for it in the revelation which creates our religion, and unfolds in its history. This revelation is more than a spoken word or a luminous truth; it is God's presence in a new creative Act of Redemption. Such objective religion is the basis of subjective. At this depth, authority is the effective thing rather than affinity, God's grace rather than man's sympathies. Faith's relation to experience or piety. The Gospel does not bring a new interpretation of life, but a new life to interpret. Re-creation is the moral foundation for reconstruction in the grand style; the new birth underlies the new world and its new order.

II. The claim for Episcopacy must rest on a theory of it, its universality on its imperative. Is it imperative? Is it the will of the Redeemer? Is it vital to the Gospel? That is a theological question (though of the prime theology, and not the secondary). Christian life, unity, and liberty must rest on the theology of the Church rather than on its desire; on the Redemption which created the Church rather than on its fraternity. Analogy of the American Constitution for Democracy. So for the Church. Only, its saving order is not a polity, as with a State, but a *Holy* Spirit with a positive and active content. A common and creative creed is at least as essential as vivid impressionism or fixed organisation. The same Word of moral power which rent the Church at the Reformation must heal it. The saving Word is a constant creating, especially by crisis. Here is Reunion.

III. We need a rallying centre more positive than the great character, or even the hospitable person, of Christ. We need Christ's consummation of His person in action, moral, crucial, final for God and the world. The Act of the Cross as the creation of the Kingdom of God, which is the *raison d'être* both of Incarnation and Church. The Church prolongs the Redemption, and not the Incarnation.

IV. The point that creates the unity of all Churches is the evangelical crisis of the conscience of God and man in Re-

demption. Reconciliation is moralised by Atonement, and eternalised. It must go beyond a Christianised Humanism, or a union of hearts only, or a social ideal. Hence the unity desired cannot be in a system but in a moral principle, which, as historic, is a power, and a personal power, in action. It is the principle and power of the Kingdom (or rather Kingship) of God, which for Christ Himself determined everything, and especially determined His death *as the active and final crisis of the moral universe.* The unhappy submersion of an evangelical and urgent moral theology in a reflective and leisurely culture-theology. The Kingdom or the Logos? The unity, the catholicity, of the race is in its conscience, and in its conscience as redeemed. The demoralisation of the Church is caused by its passion to be catholic before it is holy. The "hegemony of the moral" means that conscience is the source and security of culture; and it means also the sovereignty of the holy in a society of love. Such hegemony implies the evangelical principle that Atonement to the Holy is the first charge on a Redeemer and His Gospel. To satisfy heaven is to justify earth. The evangelical succession and solidarity mean the moralising of theology, religion and society. The only thing that can really unite the Church is what morally reconciles the world—not the spiritual Jesus, but the atoning Christ.[1]

V. But the Evangelicalism must be liberal. First, in its treatment of the Bible, and its welcome of the critical method as among the greatest gifts of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, in its hospitality to modern philosophy and culture. And, thirdly, it must be an evangelicalism which makes the foundation for Christian ethic, and so for all social ethic and national politics. A league of nations only possible by a Kingdom of God. The Gospel must escape from coteries and be equal to the moral

[1] I do not develop this in the text for reasons of space. It involves the vital difference between an æsthetical religion and an ethical—between an impressive Jesus, as spiritual splendour satisfying a religion which *views* His person as hero, friend, or ideal, and a regenerating Christ (with all His person gathered upon the Cross in an obedience), satisfying and delighting the Holiness ethical and eternal, which our faith does not view but share. This is a difference which creates two distinct types of religion or of Church, of which the one is much more powerful in history, and more effective for the Kingdom of God, than the other. The severance of the Church from the moral needs of society, which is so deplored in the Report of the Archbishops' Committee on Industrial Life, is due to the capture of the Churches by the æsthetic type instead of the ethical, by the Logos idea instead of the Kingdom, by piety instead of faith, and the study of religion rather than of God.

control of history, nations and affairs. It has to moralise both Church and world more searchingly and powerfully than the teaching of Jesus alone can do; which *by itself* has more ideal than dynamic. The Catholicity is in the dynamic rather than in the precept. Christ was not a legislator. Our Reunion must rest as deep as the Reunion between God and man—on our Redeemer *quâ* Redeemer, as the new Creator and energy of the moral universe. Christianity is the religion of moral redemption. A moral religion is very much more than a religion of morality, or even of loyalty. It is a religion of regeneration, personal and historic. That is, if we are to escape the blight of the *via media*, and become as thorough as salvation is. The measure of the world is the conscience; whose own measure is its origin in a Saviour, and not its ideal in a sage. The one holy Church of love is the creation of the one holy Gospel of Grace.

UNITY AND THEOLOGY

A LIBERAL EVANGELICALISM THE TRUE CATHOLICISM

I

There cannot be many people really Christian who are quite indifferent to union of the Churches in some form more obvious and effective than the present map of the Churches shows. But such people are certainly to be found; who say, "Let us alone. We are doing well enough with a general sympathy growing on the whole, with occasional fraternising on common ground, or with co-operation in neutral regions." But is that not as if Christian unity were no more than suburban neighbourhood, pious proximity, or a collective egoism modified rather than converted? Sanctified egoism may truly do much, but it is only a half-way house. However it be with the private piety of such people, are they more than sectarian in their Church mind? Do they rise above group egoism in the public relations of their faith? As a matter of fact the spirit, not to say the passion, of real union, union effective and not merely ideal or sympathetic, is in the Christian air; it is also, and far more, in the Christian Gospel; and the only question is as to its focus and its forms.

But these conditions do create a very real difficulty, with which many who are keen for the idea do not yet see how to deal. Many of the idealists seem to think that the notion and its eager sympathies are enough. They hold that the obstacles are gratuitous or even factitious, that they are morbid growths which would dissolve if the heart's action increased and the temperature rose. Now we cannot do too much to cultivate the common sympathies—unless we do it at the cost of a Christian intelligence and conscience. But all the good will in the world will not settle the merits of the case. What is the cardiac remedy we should take? In these great and venerable problems solutions are not simple, else they would have been found long ago. Answers to age-long questions are not to be given off-hand. Ideal ardours without historic sense will not suffice. They may mislead. They will certainly disappoint. We cannot deal with history by wiping the slate and starting afresh. We cannot treat tradition as a perfect fool. Agitation will not bring life or liberty for the Church at least. These come from the nature of its creative source. We cannot deal with division by charging it on theology, and executing the culprit out of hand. We cannot make a mental solitude, and call it Christian peace. The problem will not yield to amateur good feeling. If union come, it is a sympathetic theology, but also a positive one, that is to bring it. The Church rests on its belief, which it is constantly clarifying at the spring. And that is why the scholars of history and the thinkers of faith are coming to play such a part in the matter. From being polemics, they are turning to be among the chief

eirenics of the day. Parties may join for expediency, but Churches can unite only on principle. Here the ways of the State are not those of the Church. To develop a State from a general principle may seem academic and Teutonic ; but with a Church it is inevitable. A State is not founded on a special revelation, a Church is. The charter of the Church is a gift of God in a sense which is true of no State. Let us not shrink from cherishing for the Church a foundation principle such as it might be pedantic and even fatal to apply to the State. Let us beware lest our political success lead us to the philistinism of applying to the Church those standards and expediencies which work so well in national affairs. The Church was created at an historic point by a final act moral and divine ; the State, however divine, was founded in no such way ; it grew by a series of adjustments in an ascending scale.

When we lay stress on the past, and on a point and act in the past, we are only pressing one phase of the standing difference between objective and subjective religion, between a religion of faith and one of piety, between religion of the historic and religion of the intuitionist type, between a religion of the saving facts of history and a religion of the consciousness. It is a difference which much in current religion tends to erase or ignore. With a democracy whose education has just begun there is a fatal impatience of anything beyond brotherly sympathy, immediate impression, vivid views, sharp alternatives, and hard extremes. There is a dangerous confidence in empirical conviction. Now this is all very well for an individual, but it will not carry a society, and least of all a Church. A crude

mass of such impressibles is easily convinced that there is nothing which they cannot grasp, do, or undertake, from a scheme of drainage to the control of the Fleet. And they are abetted by the cocksureness of practical success. The valuable man of business, for instance, is often quite prepared to run the education of the country. So the impressions or opinions of a religion individual and subjective are made to do duty for the realities of objective and historic revelation ; and what is called life with its realisms is set up to overbear all the best verdicts of history about reality. The trouble becomes acute in the public attitude to theology, which is now probably the only great subject in which special study is held to be a disqualification, profound truth an enemy to the soul's life, the man in the pew a competent critic, the man in the train an authority, and the Press a court of appeal. It is even held in quarters, not only that a Church of energetic piety can do quite well without a creed, but that a creed is a useless survival, which, like the appendix, can become a source of danger to the body.

Now in view of all this it is necessary to say, with much respect, that the Union of the Churches can never be brought about on a basis of subjective and empirical religion, *i.e.* of religion which is more full of its experience than of the source which creates the experience, and creates the Church. It can never be brought about just because it is in the air, nor because it seems to meet democratic aspirations. It does ; but these will not bring it to pass : "I will hear what God the Lord will speak ; to His people He will speak peace."

If I may supplement our vocabulary in this region by a clumsy word, I would say that the divided Churches have become weak, and even futile, through the excessive growth of religious subjectivity. "That must be true which does me good; that must be real which impresses me." Religion indeed is not possible without experience; but we have worn the idea of Christian experience thin. Truly orthodoxy of an intellectualist kind had made the movement to experience imperative. But we have gone farther than that—farther than a due recovery of balance; we have made experience a test. We judge of truth or reality as that which we feel does us good like a proper meal. We have sought the test of truth in the degree in which it is vouched for by immediate, or individual, or group experience. We have not stopped to ask "Whose experience?" nor "Experience of what?" Nor have we found a criterion by which to select from a crowd of experiences the reality which gives them a scale of value. Experience tells me I am saved, but could any experience assure me the whole world will be saved? Such theology does not pierce the depths or grasp the certainty of a divine purpose; it becomes but spiritual psychology. We have no science of God, but only a science of religion. We pursue a theology of consciousness, not one of fact, of history, of gift, of revelation, of power. We infer God and His ways from our consciousness; we do not explain our state of consciousness by God's treatment of us to begin with. We believe in God's fatherhood by a mere analogy from man's. We postpone revelation to religion; which is an entire inversion. And that does not make for

unity. For we are not one as religious but as redeemed, and especially from petty piety.

As we develop the modern subjectivity I name, we grow weak, trite, and trivial. Every Church feels it. And the frank Churches own it. We begin to realise that a ruling objectivity, a creative authority, is the one thing needful both for Union and for life and its liberty. The power to which we owe our life gives also our liberty and our unity. Union must be what our faith is—an act less of sympathy than of obedience to the authority of love's moral and sovereign Gospel. Experience is one thing, and may be but fraternal; faith is another, and must be royal. Faith is a matter of experience, but experience is not faith. And the difference is that in faith we are more concerned with the object than with the experience. "We preach not ourselves but Christ crucified." Faith is much more than piety. It is more concerned with the nature of the object than with the mood of the subject. It is more interested in our justification than in our peace. It is more anxious that God should come by His own than that we should be safe. And it is on faith that a Church rests, and not on experience. It must begin with God. It must found on God's self-revelation, though it may take shape in our appreciation of it. Experience, piety, makes but a group; what makes a Church is faith, and its self-oblivious engrossment with its Object, as Creator and King. Our justification, our forgiveness, is an act of God before it is an experience of ours. Therefore it is not answered by experiences which come and go, but by faith, as a standing act, which has its sunlit patches of experience as God wills. We

are surer than we feel about the Cross of Christ as the thing that puts us into the Kingdom of God and its righteousness. We are surer of His knowledge of us than of our knowledge of Him. We forget ourselves in a godly sort. Moses coming from the Mount knew not that his face shone. We are not members of the Kingdom of God just because we have gone through an experience. We believe far more than we are conscious of, but experience is limited by our consciousness of it. The unity of the Church invisible is beyond all our sense of being one. It rests on the act of God and our faith of it, our committal to it. And it creates its own recognition.

Experience is not valuable in itself ; all turns on its source and object, which gives it its quality, and which we apprehend by faith. Otherwise it could easily produce but an æsthetic religion which consists more of impressions than of life committal. Experience is as our temperament is; faith is as its object, which is grace, holy love as grace. Experience answers suggestion, faith answers revelation. The one may respond to a *movement* of God, to His Spirit, the other answers His *action* and above all His *act*—to His *Holy* Spirit of our redemption. The one is concerned with God appearing and speaking, the other with God coming and doing. The one is luminous, the other new-creative. The one places itself æsthetically, intelligently, reverentially before a manifestation of God, the other ethically, personally, worshipfully, within His saving act. The one depends much on God's gift of a prophet, the other wholly on God's gift of Himself in Christ crucified. And it is on this last that the Church lives, since it was created by it. The Church was created

by the redeeming blood and not by the edifying sacrament. Moreover, the source of the Spirit which makes the Church is the Cross and not Pentecost, a world crisis and not a group experience. The distractions and bewilderments of the Church are due to a departure from the Cross of our justification, and a recourse to the Christ of our varying sympathies. The creative faith is faith in the Christ of the Cross ; but the sympathetic experience may feel the attraction of Jesus more than the redemption of Christ. Experience thinks of God moulding us or changing us—words which contain natural notions. But faith thinks of our justification as a new creation—which is the supernatural power. Evolution moulds us, grace remakes us. We are born again in Christ, and not merely shaped or altered. And it is because the Church has ceased to realise itself as a new moral creation that it has lost its moral power over the created world. It may become but a humane institution, a friendly society. It does not feel its existence to be a miracle, therefore it can perform none. It believes in nothing contrary to experience, nothing but what comes in the warm air of experience, therefore its experience is not adequate to the contrary experience of the world.

Does it not follow that the message for the time is not one that merely seeks to enrich, or even interpret, experience, but one that aims to create faith ? Faith is not a new interpretation of life, but a new life to interpret. Genius can give the one, the other needs a Saviour. Faith in God's grace is a thing more moral than experience, less temperamental, more universal, more catholic. And being so moral it concerns first a

God of *holy* love, and then our conscience, its sin, and its righteousness. It begins with God's forgiveness and justification of us. Christ the Redeemer is more to it than Jesus the prophet or the paragon. And Redemption is the burthen of the Apostolic gospel. So the unity of the Church rests on the apostolic succession. But by the apostolic succession is not meant merely the historic. It means a succession to the apostles as sacraments and not mere heralds, far less as officials—the succession to them as interpreters and not publishers, as trustees of an experienced Gospel and not of a canonical technique. The Apostolate was the Sacrament that made the Church, men prophetic for a Gospel and not ministrant of a rite. The Church rests on the evangelical succession and its unity is the evangelical solidarity. The interpreter of the Gospel, the real successor to the Apostolate, is not the Church but the Bible as the precipitate of the apostolic message. What opens the treasures of redemption is not a warranted priesthood but regenerate apostles. Is the Bible chiefly the record and sacrament of Redemption, or is it a quarry for orthodoxy, or is it the trust deed of a ceremony?

II

The foundation of any real unity must lie in the nature of our creative source. Religion is just what revelation makes it. What unites individuals into a Church is not a common experience but a common revelation. It is a common Lord, or Spirit, who creates a faith of which its experience is but a phase, who creates a soul whose experiences are but its

chapters or even clauses. I believe with all my heart when I feel nothing, or am engrossed with my day's duty. It is an objective bond and not a subjective sympathy that is the real nexus. The circle is made not by the contiguous points in the circumference, but by their relation to the centre. And the same is true when it is a case of uniting Churches, and not mere units.

And more. The authority, the kind of power that makes our unity, is historic, but it is historic in a focus and not a career. I mean that what is chiefly involved is not just the objectivity of the *course* of history, our canonical tradition, our official continuity, nor even the mottled record of our moral efficiency in affairs ; it is the nature and action of the power that, from a *point* in history, creates both the faith and the tradition. That is, it is not objectivity alone, not canonicity, it is theology that is needed. Religion is made what it is by the *nature*, the interior, the dynamic, the theology, of the revealing act.

It is made by a revelation which is energetic, creative, and not merely exhibitory—by revelation as redemption and not just as truth, as an act moral enough to set up for all conscience the Kingship of the holy God. If our cohesion is not there, it cannot be *permanently* anywhere. Fact, history, is quite necessary, but it is the nature, the interpretation, the theology, of the historic fact, the nature of its purpose and action, that tells. It is the eloquence of the fact, or let me rather say its vitality, its conductivity, its conveying power. It is fact as sacramental. If it were suggested, for instance, that the episcopal polity should be made universal and necessary for the Church while any

theory of it was disclaimed, the two things would not seem to march. Could we claim monopoly for any spiritual fact or institution except on the authority of its rational interpretation or moral monarchy? Could the unity of a Church depend on even the highest convenience? Could the highest practical utility or historic prestige found unity in the Church of an absolute Gospel? What will win the world is indeed a union of the Churches, but a union in virtue of the Gospel that unites them. It is the Gospel that looses and binds, divides and heals—not the Church, and not its ministry.

A theology then is not an adjunct nor a luxury of a Church, but it is creative for it. The Church did not arise out of the character of Christ, nor out of His historicity as a prophet, but out of the loving nature and moral work of His person as Redeemer. It arose out of a Christ not merely historical but theological, out of a creative theology of Christ's work, which made the spiritual power of Gospel and Church something more moral and permanent than the religious impression He produced. He impressed many whom He did not regenerate and did not keep. I am not speaking here of a systematic theology, as I am not speaking of an official Church. Both of these have, to be sure, been treated as sacral, *i.e.*, as of first moment for the soul for their own sake. But I do not mean that organised theology or Church. I am speaking of the prime theology, which is dynamic, and not the secondary, which is scientific—of the theology which is ethical and economic and not logical and æsthetic (if we may

use Croce's terms). I speak of a prime, seminal, creative theology, which does not handle themes but powers, a theology of God's action rather than His truth, a theology of final, moral redemption, which (and not precept or statement) is the centre, power, and characteristic of Christianity. It is the mysticism of moral redemption.

When we realise that such a theology created the Church at the first, we must realise also that it makes the life, liberty, and unity of the Church as it goes on. These things cannot be had from a creed that begins with neoplatonic notions of Logos and Incarnation, but only from one that rises to an Incarnation which we cannot experience, from an Atonement which we can. The Church is made and spread by a continuous creation of the moral kind, which sets up the Kingdom of God by the holiness in His love—by His grace. The creative act is eternal whether in the first creation or the second: and in the second it is a moral creativity. The unity of the Church lies in the moral act of love which created the Church, and continues to create it. Such prime theology is not an expression of faith, it is the origin, creator, and norm of faith, with a simplicity massive, profound, and wealthy. It is revelation; and the religion does not make the revelation. This revealed foundation of the Church's life is also the power and principle of its unity. Such unity is not to be found in waves of sympathy which sweep over its membership, nor in a hierarchy of its officials, but in the "organising surges" from its Redemption, which at once create and control its life, and which develop a constitution flexible enough for life.

I have said that that unity is more than an organ of Christian fraternity and sympathy. Take Democracy as an example. Take the American Constitution. Is that just the expression of Democracy ? Is it just its organ ? Is its value the facility with which it gives effect to each flush of movement that spreads through the population from time to time? Nay ; from the President's power and veto downwards, (more thorough than anything we have in king or peers) is it not an elaborate and sagacious system, not for registering democracy, but for correcting it and protecting it from itself and its subjective humours ? A democracy, of all forms of government, needs that safeguard most. And this should be well considered by those ultra-democratic Christians who live in an atmosphere of suspicion of a central authority. Without that central authority nothing of moment or stay can be done in the region of affairs, of public affairs. The more democratic the Church is, the more it needs a source of life and control, and not of mere energy released from control, and misnamed freedom. Its great movements must be inspired, and permitted, and regulated by its creative principle. The free Churches do not merely register the subjective affinities of an age or of a piety. They rest on a faith. And the difference between a piety and a faith (have I not said ?) is that the former, like filial piety, need not take prime account of the character or action of its object, whereas for faith these are prime, and produce worship and not mere reverence. The great committals of a Church must be moved, or at least countersigned, by a faith charged with solemn

and formative beliefs. Sympathy is not a sure sign of inspiration, nor has it its power—though as the power rises, there rises also the temperature in which it works. Faith works by love. The moral dynamic works in a sympathetic medium, with which it may be said to be consubstantial. As structure is vital to melody so is holiness to love, atonement to reconciliation.

Some urgent creed, however brief, written or unwritten, subscribed or supposed, is therefore not only of the Church's *bene esse* but of its *esse*. Indeed, the Church's central account of its faith is not simply its explication of a Logos common to God and man, but the self-expression of a divine Redeemer. It is a creative necessity from His indwelling. It is a necessity. It represents the rock the Church stands on, or rather the trunk it springs from, its eternal conservatism. And it is a creative necessity. With the Christian Church its conservatism is creative. The more it is the same, the more it changes. The God of the Church and its Gospel is, by the subtle Spirit, the grand conservative power of the world; but it is conservative in method rather than in results. As creative it has the secret, the *élan*, the adjustment, the safety and continuity of all true progress, which is a wealthy self-realisation of moral, holy, redeeming grace (Eph. i). For progress must always be measured by reference to the living identity of Christ, which is the nature of its fixed standard. A moving standard is none, as, at the other extreme, an iron standard is none. Christian progress is measured at last by the redemptive and ever creative principle, which makes Jesus the Christ;

by the principle of the moral redemption and the new creation, which is the Saviour coming, if not to Himself, yet to His own. Movement is not necessarily progress because it seems desirable or strategic at a time. It must have a standard working from a higher plane with its own coherency; and for Christianity this standard is an objective revelation of a living, creative, and yet final kind, with all the implicates of such a vital source. It is not a matter of subjective religion and its affinities, but of an objective revelation with its holy miracle of Atonement on the moral side, and its creative reconciliation on the sympathetic. How do you know that Church Union is according to God's will? Because your heart moves so? But many a fraternal ardour has cooled and subsided. Because it is filling the Christian air? But the passion of the disastrous crusades filled the Church high and low for a very long time. They had with them the heart of Europe, of civilisation, of Christendom. Take, on the other hand, the Reformation. Did it take effect because it was popular, or because it was true and touched moral reality? Something of the kind had long been popular. The rank and file of the Church were aching for it, like the best of its elect. But the desire was impotent. The landslide only came when it came as the imperative of a positive and liberating Gospel for the conscience. The breach in the Church came from the principle of its Gospel, and not from a vague feeling pervading it, nor from religious nor humane insubordination. The dividing sword was the creating Word. And the healing of such breaches must

come from the same source. "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, come again ye children of men." But it must also come as a corporate conviction and not merely an individual, as a conviction of the Church and not of its units alone; and it must come as the Church's conviction about what makes it a Church, even in the wilderness, and not about what just develops its belief or range for culture. [I might withdraw my interest from the doctrine of the Trinity and nobody would be much the worse or the better; but if the Church ignored and neglected it, would all its sympathy or its philanthropy save it from subsiding into the world of mere culture and its sequels? That creed of a Trinity saved Europe from the Moors. Athanasius saved the world from Mahomet. He commanded at Tours, Poitiers, and Roncesvalles. And if you do not see that it founds the true unity of the Church, you might at least be led to admit that the unity of the Churches could not exist without it. Still more obviously would this be so in connection with the doctrine of Redemption.] The wickedness of the present war indicates that the belief which is to unite the world, and *a fortiori* the Church, must be one which deals first and effectively with the moral evil in the world, and not merely with its ignorance or its looseness of thought.

My case is that Church unity is fundamentally a matter of the central power in its theology—and in the theology not of individuals, but of the Churches concerned; that the difficulties to be met are not just soluble in fluid and warm sympathy; that, with a final revelation of *holy* love, moral principles

and powers are more determining than affinities; that our first charge is the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, for which the Church exists; that difficulties must be worked out and not hustled out; that they must be worked out morally; and that justice must be done to the truth which each Church or its leaders feel they have in trust from a saving God. Those who are most intractable to us, the best of the high Catholics, are not moved by sheer love of prerogative, prejudice, and obscurantism. Far from it. They have a charge to keep, against even the piety, or fraternity, or democracy of the hour. There must be not only a sympathy, but a moral understanding arrived at. The matters must be thrashed out by the kind of knowledge and conscience concerned. It is not on the platform that the Churches will unite. Nor in philanthropy only. Not even in the secret oratory alone. But, with all these, largely, perhaps chiefly, in the study, where the fontal act and oracle of the Gospel is interrogated anew, and appreciated not simply as a charter but as a dynamic. The truth will create the conviction and impression which is its own driving power; but no amount of either impression or conviction will create truth.

III

In a question like this we need to be positive. We need to come to the point, the creative point. I am almost sorry to be so insistent on this. It is not enough to say we rally on Christ any more than that we rally on experience. We rally on faith, not experience. We preach not ourselves but Christ. And we rally on faith

in what was the centre even for Christ—on the work given Him to do, and done—on His redemption of us into the Kingdom of God, on the Kingdom and the righteousness on which He put everything from first to last. *Ingens iterabimus aequor.* The vital power for the reunion of the Churches, the Catholic power, is the evangelical, the last moral element in all the Churches, even in the Mass. Reunion must be planted deep, as deep as the reunion between God and man, far deeper than any reconstruction even of the Churches. It must rest on the unbought universality of redeeming grace as the greatest moral act of the universe. It must rest on the atoning Reconciliation, on a Reconciliation whose first concern was to do justice to a holy God, if justice was to be done to His love. It cannot rest on a deposit preserved with fidelity, but on a Gospel of grace prolonged by faith. The unity of the Church is supernatural in its source and nature; and it is in the moral region that the true supernatural lies. Union must rest on the permanent, the eternal, element in our living faith, which is the saving element. It is not the element of sentiment on our part so much as of certainty, of the last certainty. And the last certainty is not a certainty of intuition but of conscience, of its redemption, of its miraculous redemption, the Kingship of the Redeemer as such. We must have a foundation more objective than sympathy, an authority more miraculous and creative, one more owned in our last crisis than felt in our calm culture. By authority is meant one moral and not formal, a power whose act for us and in us leaves us no more our own. I prefer the word formal here to the word external. For all authority

must be external, if it is to save us from a mere masterless subjectivity. Externality to our egoism is of the essence of the word. But there is all the difference between an external authority which is formal, statutory, dogmatic, and one which is personal, moral, intimate, kindling, and creative; and this is neither a Church nor a theology—though it can only be described in terms which are theological and not merely humane.

But if the unity of the Church rest on Christ's supernatural and eternal—shall I say—seizure of us, which is our great certainty, it rests on it as personal and moral action on the part of God. The Church holds together by the moral and eternal act of free and triumphant grace which created it, and which is always functioning in it by the Spirit of holiness, which raised Christ from the dead. Its cohesion lies in its moral redemption. Its unity is its Redeemer. We are not vaguely in Christ as a spacious person, but in Christ in His central function, in Christ as the Creator, by redemption, of the Kingdom of God, and of the Church as its trustee. The real unity of the Church is the Kingdom of God, founded and set up in the Cross, and living by Christ as its King. The Church can only cohere in that reality, in the new Creator of its conscience, in the perennial and *holy* grace of Jesus Christ, in His grace taken as His mercy, and not chiefly as His food to us. It is not the feeding of the Church that makes it one, but its continual creation, not its sacraments but its Gospel—its sacraments only as they preach its Gospel. Its true food is its continued new creation in love's moral passion of holiness. And that is not an infused influence but an incessant moral regeneration, a constant con-

quest of our pagan egoism, private and public, the prolongation of the saving act of history which gave it birth. The Church is not the prolongation of the Incarnation, but of the Redemption for which the Incarnation is a postulate.

Therefore the unity of the Church can be in no mere polity of life or system of creed. All organisation, whether social or credal, is but provisional and opportunist. Living faith is not faith in a fabric whether of order or doctrine. Christ did not come chiefly to teach truth, but to bring the reality and power of eternal life. Till this is heartily owned, the moral power of the Church is lamed and pinched. Christ is divided. The Gospel is bound in the cerements of legalism. It does not come to its own as Gospel. It appeals more to the canons than to the conscience, to a certain technique, priestly or sacramental. It is neither national nor international, for it is righteousness that exalteth a nation. The real unity of nations is in their conscience. It is in a conscience schooled to the righteousness of Christ's holy Kingship, that the unity of the race is secured; it is not in a mystic or fraternal thrill. Man is one by the unity of his moral redemption, by his destined citizenship of the Kingdom of God, and not by the continuity of any fabric, social or intellectual. And a Church which appeals first to something else than the conscience, with its redemption, cannot at long last appeal to a nation or the race.

IV

That retreat into the permanent, eternal, and truly supernatural thing in Christianity, such realisation of

its Gospel, is the true pre-requisite of any Church unity which is to be other than forced, fanciful, or fleeting. It is a point on which the position of a liberal Evangelicalism is clear. The rallying point, the creative point, is not Christ's *teaching*. I am astonished that so many of the leaders of the Church should keep rotating on the amateurism which stakes all on that. And it is not the *character* of Christ. I am again surprised that so many should not have surmounted the fine stoicism which often passes for the religion of an English gentleman. This type is liable to drop to one which reduces Christ to an imitable splendour, or teacher, working by reverence instead of faith. It reads His Cross as an unhappy arrest on powers in Him which seemed to mark Him as the Messiah of spiritual culture, or as the incarnation of a cosmic Logos. He is made to promise the Kingdom to an Israel of sweet reasonableness, shot with prophetic warmth. But the vital and indestructible thing surely, if one half of the New Testament is not to deny the other, is the redemptive work of Christ for the moral universe, as the Gospel within the Gospels, as the last interior of His person, and the full consummation of His task. It is Christ's person as morally redemptive for Humanity, and creative for the Kingdom of God. When we are put upon the last crisis, it is not even the person of Christ as a capacious haven for the world alone, nor as the source of an emotional devotion alone, nor as an unfailing manna for the soul alone, nor as a living epitome of what we are to believe or practise. He may be any of these things at certain stages of the soul, but not for a Church's end or being. For this He is more. The

wealth of His person is all gathered up and all put into His redeeming work, as the creative crisis of the moral universe, (cf. Eph. i, 7, where the redemption in His blood is the fountain of the Church's moral and spiritual wealth, and not an item of it). His real and unique divinity is that He takes away the sin of the world by a new creation in righteousness and its saving judgment; it is not that He can be shown to incarnate the spiritual Reason, or to display the calm, sane dignity of the eternal Son of a passionless Father. The character of Christ may be made to seem so imperturbable as to be more superior than mighty, more dignified than royal. The permanent and binding element in Christianity is thus not the static keystone of a Logos or culture theology, but the creative power of a new and endless life in the holy Kingship of tragic judgment, spiritual victory, and moral reconciliation. The article ot a standing or falling Church is the evangelical.

V

Only we must loose our evangelicalism, and let it go with its own moral power. We must save the Gospel from the backwash of law. We must release it from the Bible, for instance, as a bondage, just as we had to release it from the Church as a bondage. We must release the Gospel from the Bible, as the spikenard was released from the broken box to fill the world, or the lamp from the pitcher to overcome the world. We must release it, but never detach it. We must treat the Bible as the Sacrament of the evangelical power, and not the document of a canonical system, an orthodox creed, or a pious type.

The unity of the Church rests on the evangelical succession and not on the canonical, which is legalist and Judaist, and which ties up the Church more than it unites it. The real power is the evangelical confession. The real authority is the evangelical Redeemer thus confessed in a faith as miraculous as the grace it meets. The real unity is the evangelical solidarity. And it rests upon moral and personal conversion, real but not standardised. It rests on a new birth ; and on baptismal regeneration not at all. It is in the last resort, a matter of a new centre, a new heart and conscience, and not of a common egoism, common tastes, or common theories in spiritual religion. It is not æsthetic at all in its nature, it is of a deep and transcendent ethic—of the deepest, most searching ethic we know. It rests on the readjustment of the moral universe, in a holy atonement of the evil conscience of man and the holy conscience of God. It treats this power as the norm of all Christian ethic no less than the source of all Christian experience and Church unity. It moralises all experience by the victory of God's holiness in His love.

The only thing then that can unite the Church is what subdues and reconciles the world. It is the world in the Church that divides us so. I do not mean by that the worldliness of existing Christians. I mean the importation into the faith for a long long time, of a divisive paganism, of a kind of thought that had not tasted the reconciliation nor owned the new creation. It is the afterwash of the effort by the early apologists to treat Christianity as a finial upon the fabric of natural religion, as a new storey built upon the natural

man, as an annexe of revealed philosophy where nature's philosophy fell short; but an addition still philosophic in its nature, and more rational than miraculous, more orderly than creative, in its spirit. It is the attempt to give the natural man a pious finish instead of a new creation. As if natural truth, with all its value as a point of attachment, could ever be the basis for a religion of grace, whose radical rebirth goes to the last depths of the soul.

The only power to reconcile the world is not Jesus but Christ. It is not the spiritual Jesus but the atoning Christ. It is not youth's calm hero and high gentleman, but the tragic Judge and Redeemer of a world grown old and wrinkled in wickedness. It is not the wonder of His aspect, nor the sageness of His truth, but the miracle of His historic, universal, crucial and invincible grace. The reconciliation of the natural world rests on God's recovery of the moral world. The reconstruction of public society turns on the redemption of the moral soul; and this the Church is not getting home. It all turns on the supreme crisis of the world-conscience in the Cross. To say so is not to reduce religion to morality, but it is to lift it from ethical monotheism to moral redemption. That is the whole movement of Bible history, both in the Old Testament and the New. It is to make morality transcend itself, and find itself in a religion of holy grace. A moral religion is not just a religion of morality. And to expound the moral interior of the holy is not a piece of speculative theology. It is morality in the grand style, the moral action proper to the whole destiny of man, to the whole rebirth of

conscience, and to the whole nature of God as the Holy.

It is not the Bible, I repeat, that we rally on. The Bible can be, and has been, so treated as to reduce it to be the dull code of a new law, instead of the living organ of an old Gospel. Taken by itself, idolised like a Koran, and treated like a document whose meaning is to be deciphered rather than divined, treated as a script rather than a Scripture, the Bible may well become a bone of contention and a shibboleth of exclusion. An obscurantist treatment of the Bible is a heavy handicap of the Gospel. The effective and conservative Evangelicalism must be more abreast of things than it has often been, both as to the Bible and the Church. There is little hope for anything but a liberal evangelicalism, one which casts off a "language of Canaan," which is sympathetic with sound and illuminative criticism, which has the historic sense, which outgrows the old individualism to magnify a corporate redemption, and which rises above a conventional and "proper" ethic to understand the moral psychology of the new time, and the moral interior of the new man. And it is essential that these liberalisms should not be reluctantly allowed as concessions, but that they should be joyfully proclaimed as corollaries of the principle of the moral emancipation on which everything hangs for evangelical Christianity.

To gather up and make an end. Real union must be planted deep. It must rest as deep as the union between God and man. It must rest on the world-salvation by God in His Cross.

We unite with more force, and to more purpose, when we know it to be God's historic will and achievement, than when we feel it to be man's eager wish. Our binding authority is our Redeemer in His redemption, and not in His instruction. He who redeems us leaves us with nothing we can call our own, but with everything in having Him. He destroys our self-will and our self-salvation, all our punctual compliances as such. Our rock is our Redeemer redeeming us, and not legislating about redemption and its social technique in a Church. That against the Canonist. And, against the pietist, the main thing is not the experience of being redeemed, but of a Redeemer of Whom we are more sure than we are of our experience. We shall never have the right experience of Christ till we are more concerned about His experience of us, till we look on Him Whom we have pierced. In the same way duty, where it is revealed, is a greater thing than the conscience, which is but the candlestick and not the candle. There are plenty of egoists of conscience, but too few of duty. You can cosset conscience, but not duty. Duty quenches the egoism that conscience often inflames. And so the Church is one, not in our Christian experience or conscience, or work, but in the Redeemer as creating the experience and the duty by His redemption. Experience is no authority, it is only the region of authority or its reflection. It is but the territory, not the throne, far less the King on it. And when we take stand on Catholic or Evangelical faith we are not transferring the venue to subjective religion any more than to individual. The Christian Reformation was not a change to individualist religion; that came with the

pagan Revolution. It was a change to personal religion, to a religion which was not a relation between our person and an institution in which the moral Saviour was lost, but a relation between our person and our Saviour's, in whose Cross our egoism is lost and He is our all. Evangelical faith is truly a religion of experience, but it is the discovery there of the object more than the subject, of the object within the experience as its creator, and of the King in whose faith and worship we humbly forget to think about our own loyalty at all.

This faith is the focus and the principle of the Church's unity amid all varieties of polity or creed. And in this way the union of the Churches and the League of the Nations are set on one foundation, which is the moral bond of the conscience and the Kingdom—the conscience redeemed in the one case and enthroned in the other. For the Kingdom of God set up in the universal moral crisis of the Cross is the goal and the ground both of all religion and all ethic. As the great Church is to all the Churches, so is the Kingdom of God to all the kingdoms. And the Great Church and the divine Kingdom are one.

GRACE IN SACRAMENT

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SYNOPSIS

It is easy to start on wrong lines in a discussion of this subject, because there are no guiding generalisations on it in the New Testament, where 'grace' is used in various senses and 'sacrament' is never defined. To start from either nature or dogma is to lose the scriptural *animus*. There are, however, in the New Testament certain "principles of association" which guide us.

I. Grace is associated with Christ personally: *whenever we think of it and what it does, we must think of Him and what He does.* Application of this to the question of 'grace of orders.'

Thus, the important thing in a Sacrament is what Christ does in it—not what we do.

This is to be maintained as against

(*a*) the "low" view of Baptism, which makes it only or mainly our profession or dedication;

(*b*) the (so-called) "high" view of the Eucharist, which makes it principally our presenting Christ's Sacrifice to God rather than Christ giving Himself to us. Discussion of the Mass and the Communion: the latter, since Christ's *Donum* is greater than our *opus*, the truly "high," as well as the authentically evangelical, idea. Yet the Mass, though it has mistaken the Sacrament, has not lost the Gospel.

II. As Grace is personal, so the Sacraments are evangelical: *whenever we think of and wherever we bring them, we must think of and bring the Gospel.*

In the institution of the initiatory Sacrament, the commission to baptize is *part* of a commission—the other and primary part being to preach the Gospel.

'Word' and 'Sacrament' as two means of the Gospel. The 'mystery' is in the Gospel itself, not in one more than the other of its channels.

This association of word and sacrament keeps us from

(*a*) making sacraments indispensable. Discussion of the relation between Baptism and Salvation;

(*b*) treating them as of little value.

The peculiar value and significance of Holy Communion as distinguished from the word preached: it *intensifies* and *enlarges* our union with Christ. His personal voice and presence in the Communion.

This intense experience to be saved from individualism, this takes us to the corporate aspect of the sacraments.

III. The Sacraments, which are thus evangelical, are also corporate: if we would gain their benefit, *we must associate them with the Church*, which is Christ *in membris Suis*. (This is one reason why there are Sacraments in a spiritual religion, for corporate acts must have an external expression.)

Application of this to

(*a*) Baptism, particularly of infants;

(*b*) The Eucharist. St. Paul's record of the Institution (I Cor. xv, 20 sqq.).

Bearing of this on the topic of unity. There is in Christendom to-day no *complete* Eucharistic service. This, therefore, the place to which we must not take our divisions or "distinctive principles." Insistence on the "Lord's Table" as the Lord's, not ours: He alone invites and He alone excludes. Intercommunion in connection with unity.

Conclusion. The corporate fellowship at the Eucharistic service is with more than the Church on earth, and is "with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven." What language can be too large to express the measure of this catholic adoration?

GRACE IN SACRAMENT

It would be difficult to name two terms, connected with Christian doctrine, where there is greater danger of going off on wrong lines at the very outset of a discussion than these very terms "grace" and "sacrament." This is not because these are topics of peculiar complexity or perplexity; they are indeed simple in their nature—which is, of course, not to say they are not also profound—and much of the difficulty which has been associated with them is introduced by human reasoning rather than inherent. The danger arises from the fact that in the New Testament—which in these pages we may assume to be recognised as the guiding norm for Christian truth—there are no general ideas on these subjects which might serve to set the course for our thought. The term "grace" is used in the New Testament in very varying senses, ranging from graciousness, or what may be called winningness, which St. Luke tells us was a characteristic of our Lord's manner of speech, to the totality of the blessings of salvation, which is what St. Paul means when he speaks of "the riches of His grace." With the word "sacrament," the absence of a general guiding idea is still more marked. There is not in the Gospels or Epistles a single line which a scholastic theologian

would place under the heading, *De sacramentis in genere.* Nay more, the two sacred rites which all Christians—with the exception of the Society of Friends, the Salvation Army and a few others—have accepted and observed as sacraments are never mentioned together, nor is it in any way suggested that they are institutions of the same kind, illustrating some common "sacramental principle." In short, there are in the New Testament no generalisations about either grace or sacrament; and therefore people who do generalise about them—as the present writer has been asked to do in this essay—should take particular care lest they do so on lines which, from the beginning, are not parallel with the lines of New Testament thought.

For this reason I do not propose to start our discussion here in either of the two ways which seem to commend themselves to such an honoured writer as the present Bishop of Oxford (Dr. Gore), in his book entitled *The Body of Christ.* One of these ways is to start from nature; the other to start from dogma. By starting from nature, I mean saying that "handshaking is the sacrament of friendship" and "kissing the sacrament of love" and "the flag the sacrament of the soldier's honour," and then asking what there is in the Christian religion to "hinder such use of sacraments." [1] This does not help us to much of value for accurate thinking about the meaning of sacramental grace. If it is merely an analogical or pictorial way of speaking, so be it. If it is meant to be a philo-

[1] Gore's *Body of Christ,* pp. 38, 39. This line is more fully developed in the late Bishop Paget's essay in *Lux Mundi.*

sophical approach to the great Christian principle that truth is a unity, and that Christ includes and completes nature as well as transcends it, then it begins at the wrong end, just as Henry Drummond's most interesting but quite unphilosophical *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* did.[1] But this is not important; and no doubt such a line of thought appeals to and helps some mental temperaments. The other way of beginning—from dogma—is important. This is exemplified in Dr. Gore's book. He first inquires for and argues for the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Eucharist, and then, in practically no more than some twenty pages near the end, turns to ask if the New Testament supports these views. He has a few sentences defending this method, and this is undoubtedly a world in which something can be said for anything. But nothing that is said in defence of this alters the fact that it means approaching the New Testament with an occupied, which is not much different from a biassed, mind. It means that you go there not to ask simply what the Apostolic writers say, but to ask specifically what they say—even what they can be got to say—*for this.* Almost any heresy pursuing this method can discover something of a case for itself. Of course I do not for a moment deny the importance of Church doctrine; but we must get our salient bearings from something purer and more primitive than dogmatic development. The result in Dr. Gore's book of his not doing so is that, while the

[1] The philosophical (and Christian) line is Spiritual Law in the Natural World. The lower is to be interpreted in terms of the higher, not *vice versâ.*

book as a clear and comprehensive analysis of phases of Eucharistic dogma is admirable, and, on many points, really valuable, he does not discuss the topic with what I may call (using the word in its good sense) the *animus* of the New Testament. Now this is just what is wanted in a discussion of sacramental grace. Can we not start with at least the New Testament *animus ?*

I think we can. Though it is true that the term "grace" is not used definitively in the New Testament, and that the term "sacrament" is not used at all, still both grace and sacraments are there associated with what is definite; and, if we can get these associations fixed in our minds, it will—so to speak—*anchor* our thoughts on the subject, and keep us from drifting about on some breeze of ingenious fancy, or from being carried too far by the ecclesiastical tide. This is the method I propose to follow.

I

Let us take, first, the elusive term "grace." When we pass from its obviously slighter meanings to its fuller and spiritual meaning in the Pauline epistles, we find that grace is associated, explicitly or implicitly, with Christ Himself. St. Paul describes it as "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and, while, of course, it is attributed to God the Father Who is the Source and Author of all good, even then he repeatedly adds Christ's name, as when he says of this "grace of God" that it "is given you by Christ Jesus."[1] It is surely unnecessary to multiply illustrations of this as a ruling

[1] 1 Cor. i, 4.

thought. We shall certainly have something of the Apostolic *animus* on this subject if we start, neither from flags nor dogmas, but from this association of ideas—that, *whenever we think of grace and what it does, we must think of Christ and what He does.* This will be found to be of more practical use than may at first sight appear. Take, for example, an application from beyond the immediate range of this essay—take what is called "the grace of orders." Treat that as a something by itself, and really almost anything may be argued of it and from it. A discussion may go on simply interminably as to whether, say, Canon Liddon, being episcopally ordained, had "it," and, say, Mr. Spurgeon, not being episcopally ordained, was without "it." But recall to your mind the governing thought that grace must be associated with Christ. Then the abstract thing called "grace of orders" becomes a personal thing—Christ, Who is discerned by what He does, blessing and using His ministers for the ends of His gospel and His Church. Now, the question is not so vague. You can do almost anything you like in argument, if you are even a moderately clever man, with an abstract term. You cannot do anything you like in argument with Jesus Christ. If this be true of grace in connection with orders, it is equally true of it in connection with sacraments. The term will be saved for us from many an abuse and error, if we anchor it to the person and act of Christ Himself. "Grace in sacrament" is not some metaphysical or semi-physical influence or essence: it is essentially personal. It is Christ—God in Christ and through the Holy Spirit—doing something in this way. As Augustine insists,

Ipse autem donat invisibilem gratiam.[1] The way of it we shall consider presently; the point to get hold of first is that He does it.

From this follows something which, when it is stated in words, probably no one will deny, but which, nevertheless, is very practically denied alike by persons on the extreme right and by persons on the extreme left in sacramental doctrine. It is this—that the important thing in a sacrament is not what we do but what Christ does. Let me explain this by applying it, first, to what is popularly called the "low" view and, secondly, to what is also popularly but less accurately called the "high" view. Its bearing on the former is seen chiefly in connection with Baptism, and its bearing on the latter in connection with the Holy Communion or Eucharist.

There are many people—especially in the Nonconformist Churches—whose main and indeed sole idea of Baptism is that it is a person publicly professing his Christian faith and allegiance, or, in the case of a child, his parents dedicating him to Christ. This element of human activity has its place in the sacrament, which, without it, would have no ethical purport. But it is not, and never should be made the primary and characteristic thing. The very symbol proves this. What is the symbolic action in Baptism? It is cleansing with water. Well, is it we who cleanse? Assuredly not. It is Christ Who cleanses. Baptism then, as its symbol manifestly shows, means not something which we do, but something which He does.

[1] Ep. cv, 12. This is the root idea of the Augustinian, as distinguished from the Thomist, conception of grace.

If people such as I referred to in the opening of this paragraph would perceive this, I think they would feel that Baptism is a far deeper and diviner thing than any human profession or even prayer ; and, I may add, those who are not able to accept infant-baptism—a subject which will arise for consideration later—might be disposed to look at this sacrament once more in the light, not of what the infant can do, who of course can do nothing, but of what Christ can do, for surely there is much He can do for even a little child. When what He thus does is called "Baptismal regeneration," it may not be named aright ; but it is certainly right to make His act, rather than any human act, primary and pre-eminent. Let us exalt Christ and what He does in the sacrament far above ourselves, and what we do.

The application of this to a "low" view of Baptism, which regards it mainly and even solely as our profession or promise, is sufficiently obvious ; but I venture to say that there is the same kind of error to be found at the opposite extreme in the so-called "high" view of the Eucharist, which makes that sacrament principally the offering by us of a sacrifice to God, rather than the receiving from God what He offers to us in Christ. Of course there is something we do. In St. Paul's phrase, "we proclaim"—the word just means preach—"the Lord's death" ; and, as the Anglican Prayer-book says, "We offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee." But anything which we do must be kept secondary to what Christ does in this sacrament, when He gives

Himself to us. There grew up, however, in the Church —in ways and under conditions clearly discernible to any student of the third century—the conception that in the Eucharistic service we do something of supreme significance. It is stated by Cyprian, who did as much as any man to fix this development, when he says, "*passio est enim Domini sacrificium quod offerimus.*" [1] This has been magnified in the medieval and modern Roman Church to be the culminating point of the service, so that the presentation of the sacrifice of the altar is made far more important than the participation in the Communion of the Lord's Body and Blood; and a similar development is strong in a section of modern Anglicanism.[2]

Now I do not here enter into any argument to show that the introduction of the idea of our offering to God in the Eucharistic service a sacrifice for sin—an offering other than the offering of ourselves of which the Prayer-book speaks—is to bring in something entirely foreign to the *animus*, and even the language, of the New Testament; this has been often discussed, and to enter on it now would lead us far beyond our immediate theme. What I want to point out at present is that this is again to make our part in the sacrament prominent. I desire to do this with sincere and—if I may use such a word—even tender regard for the feelings of devout souls to whom the sacrificial doctrine of the Eucharist is supreme and holy. And I am aware that, truly stated, that

[1] Ep. lxiii, 17.

[2] Whether legitimately or not, in view of the Articles and the Prayer-book, I am not called on here to discuss.

doctrine would say that it is not really or ultimately we who offer the sacrifice, but Christ, and that the action of the celebrant is to be associated with His, Who is "Himself the Victim and Himself the Priest." Thus—to quote Cyprian again—*ille sacerdos vice Christi vere fungitur qui id quod Christus fecit imitatur.*[1] I do not discuss this controversially here: it is open to exegetical, doctrinal and even spiritual answer But whatever view be taken of it does not alter the facts that the main direction of the Mass is from man to God, not from God to man; and that, in the ritual of the Mass, the most solemn moments mark acts in which our—or the priest's—part is essential and conspicuous.[2] The culmination of the service in the Roman rite is the elevation of the Host. The elevation of the Host, as done in the Church of Rome, is a singularly impressive ceremony. When witnessed in some great cathedral with the full pomp of High Mass and, perhaps, with military honours, —trumpets ringing out in the awed silence and arms presented—it is, indeed, the most striking ceremony devised by man. And it is not less but more affecting if seen in some village church, with a company of simple worshippers, where the mind and imagination

[1] Ep. lxiii, 14.

[2] This is much more marked in the Roman Missal than in the Liturgies of the Eastern Church. Thus, in the former, the supreme action of the mystery is accomplished when the priest says, *Hoc est enim Corpus Meum.* In the "Divine Liturgy"—for example that of St. John Chrysostom—the repeating of the words of Institution by the priest leads on to the prayer that God would accomplish this: "Send down Thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these laid out Gifts, and make this Bread the precious Body of Thy Christ," etc. The Eastern services all through are more full of God, and more truly eucharistic.

are undistracted with pomp and are more free to realise—and one must be destitute alike of historic sense and religious sympathy if one cannot realise—how sacred a moment this has been for centuries to millions of our fellow-Christians. Yet I will say this—that moment is not so great as the moment when Jesus Christ gives Himself to the humblest communicant. His *Donum* is greater than our *opus*. And thus the Sacrifice of the altar is not the supreme expression of religious devotion: the Sacrament of the Holy Communion is. The purest piety, even in the medieval Church, instinctively knows this. The section of the *De Imitatione Christi* on the Sacrament is so full of the thought of how Christ is to be "received," that it does not even mention what we are presenting to God, except, of course, our heart's love and adoration. The great Eucharistic hymns of Thomas Aquinas[1] —the *Tantum Ergo* and *Ecce Panis* and *Lauda Sion* and *Salutaris Hostia*[2] —have the same note. And—what is more important than either à Kempis or Aquinas—this is the dominant note of the Evangelists who

[1] Protestants think of such a man as Thomas Aquinas too exclusively as a dry and dogmatic schoolman. Aquinas was also a saint. It is to be remembered that the medieval theologians expressed their religious feeling, not in their theology, which is not "experimental," as that of the Reformation is, but in their devotional writings.

[2] These hymns imply transubstantiation and have other dubious points. (*E.g.*, *Ecce panis angelorum*. It is not the bread of angels; sinless beings cannot even taste Christ's Body broken and Blood shed for the remission of our sins.) But, for my part, I can join in them more than in many a modern popular Eucharistic hymn, which occupies the mind with what "we" are presenting or pleading, at the very moment when we should be thinking of Christ giving Himself to us.

record the Institution; of the three Synoptics, two do not mention the "Do this"—"so wholly are they engrossed in what Jesus did and gave."[1] The most genuinely religious, the most authentically evangelical, and—I will add—the truly "high" view is that which exalts the Christian Sacrament in which God gives Christ to us, not that which exalts the ecclesiastical Mass in which we offer Christ to God; and all Eucharistic teaching and ritual should be regulated by this.

But, having thus referred to the Roman Mass, I am going to add this remark before leaving the subject. Whatever may be its errors or its false emphasis, the Mass does hold up Christ crucified; and, because it does this, it is and must be blessed and used of God to many a loving and faithful soul. The Mass has mistaken the Sacrament, but it has not—as some other things in the Roman Church have—lost the Gospel.

II

If we have now got as our first principle of association—so to call it—that grace is Christ Himself doing something, let us pass on to look more particularly at what it is He does in the sacraments.

The difficulty of stating a principle here in a word is that it is not a single topic, but that there are two sacraments; and, as I pointed out at the beginning of this essay, these two are never spoken of in the New Testament together. The simplest and surest place

[1] Forsyth's *Church and Sacraments*, p. 257.

for us to begin will be, I think, the institution of the initiatory sacrament; there, if anywhere, we may reasonably expect to find the idea and use of a sacrament put, so to speak, upon right lines. The words instituting Baptism are, of course, the familiar words of the great commission, "Go ye and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in (or into) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."[1] The educated Biblical student is aware that these words are not unchallenged by criticism. Dr. Harnack declares unqualifiedly that "it cannot be directly proved that Jesus instituted baptism, for Matt. xxviii, 19, is not a saying of the Lord."[2] The main grounds of objection to it are, first, its universalism, and, secondly, its use of the Trinitarian formula. Whether or not these objections can be met, I do not at present need to discuss, for it is on historical, not on critical, grounds that I think we must not take either Universalism or Trinitarianism as the principle of association we want to guide us as to Baptism. As a matter of fact, the Church learned and practised Baptism before she learned and practised Universalism; while as to the Trinitarian formula, it does not appear in the New Testament again in connection with this sacrament, the usual expression in administering which seems to have been "into the name of Jesus Christ."[3] But a

[1] St. Matt. xxviii, 19, 20. [2] *History of Dogma*, i, 79.

[3] Acts, ii, 38. Cf. viii, 16; x, 48; Rom. vi, 3; Gal. iii, 27, etc. This varying phraseology does not imply any reflection on Trini-

principle of association such as we are seeking may truly be found in that element of the great commission which is unassailed by criticism, and is enforced in every page of apostolic practice—the "making disciples" and the "teaching." It is noticeable that in the version of this commission given us at the close of St. Mark—in the last twelve verses of the book, which are almost certainly added by a later hand—this element of preaching the Gospel is supreme, and to it is added that "he who believeth and is baptized shall be saved."[1] What is to be gathered from this is that the sacrament is not to be isolated. The commission to baptize is but *part* of a commission, the other part of which is to bring the Gospel. So our principle of association is this—that, just as whenever we think of grace we must think of Christ, so, *whenever we think of or wherever we bring the sacrament, we must think of and bring the Gospel.* As grace is essentially personal because it is indissociable from Christ, so sacrament is essentially evangelical because it is—in the Lord's intention—indissociable from the Gospel.

This has to be supplemented by what I shall bring forward about the Church in the succeeding section of this essay, and it is under some disadvantage that I speak of this principle, in the first place, without relating it to the further idea. But it will be a real assistance and safeguard if, even with this disadvantage,

tarianism, nor does it even disprove that our Lord uttered the words ascribed to him in St. Matt. xxviii, 19; all it means is that, in the early days of Christianity, forms and formulæ were not the essential thing—even in such a matter as the observance of a sacrament. The Apostles were not 'spikes.'

[1] St. Mark xvi, 15, 16.

we impress it upon our minds that sacrament and word—that is the word of the Gospel—are to be kept together, and thought of as alike channels of the Gospel. It is a mistake to regard this as purely a Protestant way of thinking. It was Augustine who first coined the phrase "word and sacrament"—where "word" means, of course, not the form of institution, but *evangelium*—and who called a sacrament *visibile verbum*. Let us pursue this line a little. It will help us to think of sacraments, not magically, mechanically or metaphysically, but evangelically and—if one may use such a word—intelligibly. When we say "intelligibly," we must not imagine that, on this line or any other, we can construe the grace of God. We are not meant to construe grace: we are meant to experience it. But if we do attempt—as to some degree we must attempt—to discuss it, let us not create a spurious mystery about grace in respect of sacraments, which it has not in respect of the word. The true "mystery" is the grace of the Gospel; but one of its channels should not be made a mystery of itself more than the other.[1]

How then, let us ask, is the word of the Gospel a means of grace? It is a means of grace because, first, Christ—*vestitus evangelio*—is there presented to us through words, and because, secondly, Christ uses that presentation of Himself to bring before and to

[1] This is certainly St. Paul's view. As Dr. W. Morgan points out in his recent able study of Paulinism, "it is a significant fact that, while he frequently speaks of the Gospel as a mystery, he nowhere uses the term where we should most expect to find it—in connection with the sacraments" (*Religion and Theology of Paul*, ii, 6).

conscience, will, heart and all our being the forgiveness, fellowship and eternal life which are His and in Him. In the very same way are the sacraments of the Gospel means of grace. In them Christ is presented to us by things done—things selected by Himself for this purpose—and He uses this presentation as truly as the other to bring before us, and to us, Himself and these blessings of salvation. There is no difference as regards Christ, Who in both word and sacrament does everything. There is no difference as regards grace, which in both cases is just a name for what He does. The difference is that, in the one case, the means is the Gospel said, and, in the other, the Gospel done—in the one case an evangelical utterance, in the other an evangelical action. Neither the saying nor the doing is of the slightest avail in itself; the word does not save *verbo locuto* nor the sacrament *opere operato*. But Christ may use the one as well as the other for the ends of the Gospel. And He does use both.

Now this line of thinking not only simplifies and so straightens our ideas about sacramental grace, but it saves us from, on the one hand, the Scylla of maintaining that sacraments are indispensable for salvation, and, on the other, the Charybdis of regarding them as of little use. Both of these extremes are to be found in England to-day—the former in the Roman and part of the Anglican, the latter within the Nonconformist Churches. Neither has what I have repeatedly called the New Testament *animus*. The principle which associates the sacraments with the word, making them and it alike means of the Gospel, will guide us between these extremes.

The position that the sacraments are indispensable for salvation is maintained primarily of Baptism. The attempt is often made to base this upon the teaching of the New Testament. Certain texts—there are, perhaps, a dozen of them—are quoted which more or less explicitly connect salvation or regeneration with Baptism. On the other side, it is replied that, in some of these, the language is metaphorical; in some, the reference to the actual sacrament is doubtful; in some, other things—such as faith and repentance—are mentioned, and Baptism is but the accompaniment or expression of these. I do not here examine whether this reply holds good in every case. Whether it does or does not, surely the next step in any full and fair inquiry about what the New Testament teaches on this is to look at what it says on salvation independently of Baptism. Now if there is one thing said again and again, it is that sinners are saved if they have faith in Jesus Christ. A man who will not see that, does not know the Gospel of Peter and Paul and John. No fair-minded reader can deny that such a phrase as "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" is not a casual but a characteristic—nay, *the* characteristic—declaration of the evangel in the New Testament. But if the rite of outward Baptism be indispensable for salvation, that declaration is not true because it omits an essential. I do not find it easy to understand how a man can get past this with intellectual fairness and candour.

We, however, on the principle with which we are working, do not need to try to get past it. Indeed, it is an implicate of the principle itself. Sacrament

is a means of grace, and even of salvation. But it is not the only means. If it is not the only means, it cannot be called the indispensable means.

But while this is to be said, let us see that we are also doing justice to the feeling which associates salvation with Baptism. I have suggested that it is less than intellectually fair or candid to decline to recognise that in the New Testament salvation is promised again and again to simple faith without any mention of Baptism. But neither is it fair or candid to ignore the repeated insistence upon Baptism, nor the general consent of feeling—it was not so much argued as felt and accepted—in the primitive Church that this sacrament had an integral place in the reception of Christ to be Lord and Saviour. I do not think we should say that this is to be treated merely as an incipient stage of what developed later into serious and even gross sacramental error. The truth is that it was not so much part of the sacramental doctrine of the Church as part of her practical experience. It is part of the practical experience of even the Evangelical Church still. Missionaries often find that it is really an element in not less than a man's conversion that he should be baptized. Now the Church of the New Testament and of the sub-Apostolic age was a missionary—and also a persecuted—Church; and it is not too much to say that a man living in it was really and practically not a Christian, if he would not receive this outward sacramental seal. Thus the feeling in the early Church about the importance of Baptism was a true element in the practical life of the Christian society. It is quite another thing to erect

this into the fixed dogma that Baptism is decreed in the Christian Gospel to be indispensable for salvation. The practical life of Christianity corrects this again, just as the New Testament teaching does. In a word, the New Testament as a whole, and the experience of the Church throughout the ages at once substantiate the practical judgment, and refute the dogmatic generalisation.

The last paragraph has been somewhat of the nature of a digression, but it has served to turn us towards what I now go on to speak of as the opposite danger. If our principle of associating the sacraments of the Gospel with the word of the Gospel keeps us from the extreme of making the sacraments indispensable for salvation, it should also keep us from the other extreme of regarding them as of little use. A contributor to the volume entitled *Concerning Prayer*, giving what is, somewhat unfortunately, called "a Free Church view" of the Eucharist, says that "to many"—that is, many Nonconformists—"the Sacrament means very little; they do not stay to it."[1] Where this is true, it means a real loss of something indisputably characteristic of the Apostolic Church, which, we read in the very earliest account of it in its uncorrupted prime, "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and in the fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and the prayers."[2] These are the four foundations of the spiritual life of the Church in the

[1] Rev. N. Micklem in *Concerning Prayer*, p. 325. This statement, however, is less true of Nonconformity than of Anglicanism as a whole; in proportion to the total membership, even more Anglicans "do not stay to it."

[2] Acts ii, 42.

first picture of it, and that they include the Eucharist is hardly open to question. If to something so distinctive of the primitive Church, and something in which the first Christians "continued steadfastly," numbers of modern Christians "do not come"—and this not from any positive principle, as is the case with the Quakers, but from merely an entirely negative feeling that it is of little use—then surely there is here a defection from the *animus* of the New Testament as distinct in one direction as the dogma of salvation by sacrament is an accretion in the other. The protestant Nonconformist to whom this sacrament is practically nothing must not think that, were the Apostles to revisit the Churches, their exhortations and censures would be addressed wholly to the "errors and corruptions of Rome."

Let us then ask what was the good—to use the plainest term—of this sacrament of "the breaking of bread"[1] to the first Christians, and what is its good to us. Let us try to answer this question evangelically and intelligibly.

This sacrament—the other also, of course—is a sacrament of the Gospel, and, as we have seen, is not to be separated from that. Now the Gospel is Christ; and He is one living Person. It follows that whenever and wherever Christ is given to us—whether in word or in sacrament—there all the Gospel is given and there is all grace; we cannot indeed appropriate it all or

[1] I deal at this point with only this sacrament because as regards Baptism (which includes infant baptism) the question can hardly be discussed, even partially, except in relation to the idea of the Church, to which, as has already been said, reference will be made in the next section of this essay.

all at once, but it is all there since He is there.[1] We thus should not think or speak of some "special or peculiar gift" in the Holy Communion, for He is the One Gift and there is no "special" or "peculiar" Christ. Rather should we speak of the divinely ordained and blessed occasion on which God in a special and peculiar way confirms and conveys to us, and we in a special and peculiar way may receive, that One Gift. And when it is asked next, as naturally it is, in what consists the special and peculiar character of this occasion, as in any way distinguishing it from any general occasion on which the Gospel is brought to us, I would answer—using the plainest words possible—thus: at the Eucharist, the union between Christ and the Christian, which is the very essence of living Christianity, is, first, *intensified*, and secondly, *enlarged*.

It is intensified. This is not by its being made, in some wise, corporeal; much ecclesiastical doctrine has gone off to pursue this idea, but rarely profitably, and I do not discuss it here. Rather is it intensified by being made more intimately personal. One cannot argue about this; one can only speak out of experience, and I am indeed unworthy to do even that. I sincerely trust that no one will think that it is to introduce anything merely denominational, if I appeal to experience to elucidate what I would say by a reference to a feature in the Communion Service as I know it best, in that branch of the Church in which I

[1] This is the answer to the idea that the Roman Catholic scheme of seven sacraments, each specially suited to a distinct stage of life, affords a fuller and more varied provision of grace. Where Christ is, all grace is; and He is a Saviour and Friend equally suitable for every stage of life.

am a presbyter. In the Eucharist as celebrated according to Presbyterian usage—it is true doubtless also elsewhere—no voice is heard at the giving of the Communion but the very voice of Jesus Christ Himself in His very words. The minister does not say such words as "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." These are suitable words, but they are man's words. In the usage of the branch of the Church to which I have referred, the minister's voice at that moment is literally but the echo of the Lord's own voice, saying (in the first person) "Take, eat: this is My Body broken for you."[1] It is Christ Himself Who is here and speaking. It is He Who is Himself giving these sacred elements to the communicant, and saying, as distinctly as to the first Apostles in the upper room, "*My* Body." To the believing and expectant soul, nothing could be more intensely, individually, immediately personal; nothing could make the "Presence" more "Real."[2] And to this nothing need be, nothing can be, added. When, then, brethren of other rituals tell me that they have in the

[1] Bishop Gore regards it as less fitting that these words should be said to the communicant than, as part of a prayer, to God (*The Body of Christ*, p. 237). On this it is enough to say that, for every loyal Christian mind, the determining rubric for the service is the manner of Institution by our Lord. To whom, then—to man or to God—did He address these words? The usage described above in the text is the only way of saying these words authorised by the Divine Institutor. The sacrificial direction of them to God is based on a disregard of Christ's example.

[2] This Real Presence is not "substantially" in the elements, nor merely subjectively in the communicant, but sacramentally in the complete action.

Sacrament something higher, holier, more than is here, I reply there is and there can be on earth nothing higher, holier, more than Christ personally come to, speaking to, giving Himself to the Christian. There is, I repeat, and there can be on earth nothing more than that. Those who think that there is more are deceiving themselves—with notions about corporeity or with whatever else—and are disparaging not merely the religious experience of multitudes of their fellow-Christians, but the very gift of Christ, Who, to whomsoever He gives simply Himself, gives the absolutely and utterly best. "The Perfect will give what is perfect."[1]

This—most unworthily indicated—is at least something of what is meant in saying that in the Eucharist our personal relationship with Christ is intensified. I know that Christ can come as near to a man, and can as truly enter into him, in the midst of his daily work or on a lonely hillside as before the altar, or at the Communion Table. Still, what has been said is, I hope, some suggestion of how here is provided indeed a "special" and "peculiar" occasion of union with Christ. He has appointed it to be such, and He will keep His tryst. The Holy Spirit has been invoked—or should have been[2]—for this end, and not in vain. So true is this, that I will say that the crucial question about any man's coming to the Holy Communion—either for the first time or often—is whether he really wants to have Christ so very near to him as this.

[1] Clement of Alexandria, *Paedag.* I, 27.

[2] The Invocation of the Holy Spirit (or *Epiklesis*) should, in some form, be part of every Communion service.

Something was said, a little while back, about the numbers in the Churches—conformist and non-conformist—who "do not stay" (or go) to this Sacrament. We must not judge others; least of all must we judge *en masse.* But I am certain that there are many in all our Churches with whom what is wrong here is that they do not want to be brought *too* close to Jesus Christ. It is not a question to be discussed in general terms in an essay, but it is a searching and serious question to be faced and answered in the conscience.

I have thus indicated one side of the meaning of the Eucharistic service; it must be complemented by the other. Just because it is intense and intensely personal, it must be guarded against individualism; and the Eucharist has another side. It enlarges, as well as intensifies, our relation to Christ. This brings us to the idea of the Church and to the meaning of the sacraments as not individual but corporate acts; and this I take up—it must be very briefly—in a closing section.

III

We have found two principles of association in the New Testament to guide our thoughts—one, that grace is to be associated with Christ Himself; the other, that sacraments are to be associated with the Gospel. We must now add a third principle—that *the sacraments are to be associated with the Church.* They were first given to the Apostles not as individuals

and not as a sacerdotal order,[1] but as representing the Church; and, all through the New Testament, they are used as Church ordinances, the one as the symbol and seal of admission into the recognised Christian Society, the other as an expression of—whatever more it may also be an expression of—the Christian fellowship in the "body," which is seen to be "one" since "we all partake of the one loaf." This is not a superfluous but an essential aspect of the meaning and of the efficacy of the sacraments. They can be neither rightly understood nor rightly used apart from the common life of Christians in the Church. Indeed, this is one reason why there are sacraments. These external acts seem to some out of place in a spiritual religion. But—though this is but part of the answer—this spiritual religion is corporate, not individualistic, and corporate acts must have external expression. Let this, then, be a third principle of association for us. Rather, however, should we call all three but different forms of the one principle of everything in the New Testament, which is Jesus Christ. Our first principle about grace in sacrament was Christ acting; our second was Christ *vestitus evangelio;* our third is Christ *in membris Suis.* The sacraments are but void ceremonies unless they are full of Christ. Is not this the

[1] To anyone challenging this as regards the Eucharist and especially the authority to "Do this," I only say that, if the Eucharist, including the "Do this," was delivered to the Apostles as "clergy," then only clergy have the right to partake of it. For the "Take, eat" was indisputably said to the same persons as the "Do this." Of course, a "clergy" may be chosen and authorised "to represent the congregation in the ministerial enactment of the Sacraments" (Moberly's *Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 258).

real meaning of the Eucharistic admonition—*Sursum corda*, and the response—*Habemus ad Dominum?*

In what remains within the due limits of this essay, there is time to deal with only two or three matters in connection with this aspect of the subject, which opens out into varied and much debated directions. I shall touch on what seem to be the points of most immediate interest for us, as regards, first, Baptism, and secondly, the Eucharist.

The connection between Baptism and the Church is obvious in the case of the adult Christian, who was the normal subject of Baptism in the New Testament, just as he is the normal subject of the first baptisms in any mission field to-day. The connection requires a little more elucidation in the case of infant baptism. I do not discuss the general question, but inquire only what grace means in the baptism of infants. It is here that the importance of associating the Church with the sacrament appears. What the baptism of an infant means is this. It does not mean that some grown-up person promises for him that he will be a Christian; this no human being can promise for any other, and such vows are not within the sphere of ethical reality. The baptism of a child means not something the parent (or god-parent) does, but something Christ does. It is the gospel, that God—in Christ and through the Spirit—relates Himself to this child with love and grace, and calls it His child. This is a true gospel. God does so relate Himself to us, not as we get older and can come to Him, but from the very beginning of our lives. It is a gospel full of sweetness to any father's or mother's heart. But if

it be *a true gospel*, it may be and *should be expressed*, and expressed not merely by some individual but *by the Church*, and *through the Church's channels* for expressing the Gospel; and these are *word and sacrament*. So the child, who bears an earthly name which shows that it belongs to a human family, shall bear also "the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost," which shows that it belongs to a heavenly family too. It is not regeneration, it is gospel. But now the association with the Church comes in. This gospel has to be—if I may use the expression—made good. And it is made good, not mechanically nor magically nor automatically, but through the Church—through, that is, the care and nurture and upbringing of, in the first place, Christian parents (this is where their vows come in), and, more generally, the whole Christian influence and life. Thus, as an English (though not an Anglican) confession says, "the efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered."[1] If its efficacy be "tied" to anything, it is less to the single *act* of a minister than to the *work* of the Church. It often proves not efficacious; the child grows up to be not a Christian. Well, that does not overthrow the doctrine of Baptism, which is a doctrine of what God gives, and not a doctrine of our response on receiving that. Where a baptized child does receive this "in vain," is it not—apart from that moral freedom by which the individual may reject God's love and grace offered and brought in the Gospel—that the Church, either as a whole or in the members most immediately concerned, has not truly

[1] *Westminster Confession of Faith*, ch. xxviii, sec. vi.

and faithfully and prayerfully done her work? It is not that the Sacrament was untrue; the truth of it may, some time before life is over, reach the heart of one who has rejected or lost its gospel, and may tell him that even the prodigal son is still a son, and that God Who has been his father from the very beginning of his life—and Who said so in his baptism—is his father still. The Sacrament, with its gospel of grace for even a child, is not untrue; but the Church, which is associated with the Sacrament to make that gospel good in the child's life, may be unfaithful. Here is the evangelical reality, and here is what seems often the practical unreality of the Sacrament of the baptism of children.

When we turn, next, to the Eucharist, we find the association of the Sacrament with the Church even more intimate. How important the element of Church fellowship is in relation to the Eucharist is best seen, I think, if we look at the chapter containing St. Paul's account of the Institution,[1] and particularly at the context of this *locus classicus.* What the Apostle is dealing with is the unbrotherly spirit which was disfiguring the Christian company at Corinth in connection even with the Communion. The Christians there met at a meal—a real supper—at the close of which they partook of the eucharistic feast. Some of them were greedy and did not wait for the others, and some looked down on their poorer brethren; there was selfishness and there was snobbishness. It is to shame this that St. Paul repeats the facts of the Institution. He goes over it not to provide a rubric

[1] 1 Cor. xi, 20 *sqq.*

which shall regulate the ritual "use," but to rebuke an unworthy forgetfulness that Christians are brethren. Not only is it this which leads him to the narrative of the Institution, but it is this to which he immediately returns after narrating it. The topic of Church fellowship is thus in his mind all through; and it is therefore, I think, fair to take it that at least part of the meaning of eating and drinking "unworthily" is partaking of the Communion in an unbrotherly spirit, and that the phrase "not discerning the Lord's body" includes the not recognising the Church, which is "one body" seeing there is "one bread."[1] Certainly this much can be safely said—that the embedding of the Institution narrative in a plea for brotherliness and unity shows how great and real a part in the right observation of this sacrament is the true spirit of corporate Christian fellowship. Whether or not the lack of a certain form of ordination in the celebrant or of a certain quality in the bread and wine, can impair a Eucharist, the want of love and of unity in the Church can.

Here the discussion in this essay arrives at the theme which connects together all the essays in this volume; and I shall close with a few words on this aspect of the subject.

There is in Christendom to-day no fully catholic "Lord's Supper." The Church, in her various branches, has gained many things since her early days, but this she has lost—that all those who are truly united to the

[1] I do not mean that this is all the content of this cryptic and elusive phrase. There is also a clear reference to their not realising that they were participating in a Body broken, and in Blood shed, for sin.

one Lord can express their unity through Him with one another in His own appointed ordinance. There is something lost here more than we realise. Indeed it is not too much to say that, if the Eucharist be—as certainly it is—a sacrament of unity among Christ's members as well as of union with Himself, there is not in Christendom to-day a *complete* Eucharist anywhere. That is what the "divisions of the Church," when carried the length of the Communion Table, really mean.

Now what I want to say is that that is the one place to which we must not carry our divisions. The reason for saying this is just the reason which St. Paul, in the passage before us a moment ago, urges on the Corinthian Christians in view of their divisions. "This" he says—I quote Dr. Moffatt's emphatic rendering—"makes it impossible for you to eat the 'Lord's' Supper." Let us note the emphasis on *Kuriakon*. This feast is the Lord's: it is not ours. It is not the Episcopalians' nor the Presbyterians' nor anyone else's on earth. During the recent Kikuyu discussion, I remember reading a manifesto issued by a group of clergymen, which spoke of the impossibility of admitting Presbyterians or Nonconformists to "our altars"; with respect, I say this is not *your* altar. Sometimes one hears an intimation about "a Free Church Communion Service"; there is no such thing. Again, there are bodies of Christians who admit to this sacrament only those who hold what are called the "distinctive principles" of the body; I am not sure that any Church is called upon to have "distinctive principles"—a Church should have just Christian

principles—but, at any rate, the Lord's Table is not the place to impose them.[1] For, I repeat, it is His and His only. He invites to it and He alone. The expression is sometimes used that one Church might extend "hospitality" to members of another at the Communion. It is, I am sure, used with friendly and Christian intention, but the expression is a most improper one. Servants do not extend hospitality; only a master does. This is the Lord's Table, and He is the Master. And this follows—the Lord's Table is for the Lord's people. His servants are to protect it from intruders who, so far as human judgment can discern, are not truly His; but they simply dare not in any ecclesiastical interest—legitimate as this may be in its place—repel His accredited guests from His Table.[2] He alone excludes, as He alone invites.

[1] They may, of course, be imposed on those who are to hold special office either in teaching or ruling; but that is another matter than admission to the Lord's Table.

[2] The domestic question, which concerns Anglicans, as to the bearing on this of the Confirmation Rubric in the Prayer-book, is not one for me to discuss; but I should like to quote the following, if only for the sake of its last sentence, which, coming from Bishop Chr. Wordsworth, will carry far more weight than it does in my saying it: "It seems historically clear that the Rubric was never seriously understood as excluding Nonconformists [*i.e.* from Communion], till long after the rise of Tractarianism. It was then a new interpretation, and it was rejected by great Churchmen of all schools. Archbishops Tait and Maclagan considered that this Rubric was not meant for Nonconformists. Bishop Creighton had reached the same position in 1897, and added that Archbishop Benson agreed with him. So, too, the other great historian on the bench, Bishop Stubbs of Oxford; and Wordsworth of Lincoln, the typical High Churchman of his time, not only rejected the new interpretation, but is said to have added the solemn reminder: 'It is the Lord's Table, not ours'" (*The Confirmation Rubric*, by the late Professor H. M. Gwatkin, D.D., of Cambridge, p. 6).

It is for this reason that I, for one, regard intercommunion as so significant a thing in relation to union. By intercommunion I do not mean intercelebration; that involves further questions, such as ordination, and need not at present arise. And I neither desire nor anticipate any general or indiscriminate attendance of the members of one branch of the Church at the Communion services in another. But what I urge is that—with certain conditions and safeguards, which I am not called on here to discuss[1]—it should be frankly recognised that "our" Communion Tables are the one Lord's Table, and that to all of them He invites His people. This would be, in my judgment, a far more significant and effective step in unity than any discussion in conferences or elsewhere on the "historic episcopate"[2] and other forms of Church government, or any interchange

[1] The subject of intercommunion is discussed in another essay in this volume by my friend Canon Burroughs.

[2] As regards Episcopacy (which appears to be a kind of King Charles' head in discussions about union), I may be allowed to say, in a word, that the difficulty here is not over historicity, but over exclusiveness—over the denial of recognition to all non-episcopal communions. The "historic episcopate," every reasonable and educated Nonconformist should be prepared to look at. Exclusive episcopacy means cutting ourselves off from Church fellowship with Christian brethren all over the world; and to accept or even acquiesce in it would be not only a treachery to them, but an act of treason against unity itself; and it would be *not* to do what Christ indisputably does, Who has "recognised" non-episcopal quite as much as episcopal Churches. This, I add, is not met by the proposal to accept episcopacy, but no "theory" of it; "theory" can be suspended in mid-air, but this is *practice*, which is either in operation or is not in operation. The first and the absolutely essential step "towards reunion" is recognition; and that not in word only, but in practice.

of pulpits between preachers of different communions. Not that I undervalue these things; but, when I think of unity or *rapprochement* between Churches, it is not points of Church government I want to think of, nor is it the clergy. I want rather to think of the Christian people—of what will bring together into real and characteristically Christian nearness those who love and serve the one Saviour and Lord. Christ's appointed place for this is not in social courtesy or conferences or on platforms, but is at what I say again is His Table. If, then, it is the case—as with many, I am sure, it is—that at the Holy Communion we most deeply realise that we are one in Christ with all those who are His, and most earnestly desire unity with them as well as with Him, this is no mere subjective sentiment, but is the suggestion of His Spirit, Who appointed this sacred rite to be a fellowship of all Christians not only with their Lord but with one another. We do wrong, I humbly believe, to that Spirit when we make what are defects in Church order—important as it may be to guard otherwise against these—ground for prohibiting this supreme expression of our real unity which is in Christ, Who is the Lord and the Life of us all, and the Food of all the faithful.

But I close upon a different note. Let us reverently remember that this fellowship in Christ is more than a fellowship of this world. Those whom we call the dead—though inaptly, for they have entered into a region where all the things that go to make death what it is for us here have passed away—are, too, "in Him"; and where He comes into His Church, they are in His train. Into the corporate unity of

the Eucharistic service is gathered the whole company in heaven as on earth ; and he who celebrates does it as representative of a great multitude which no man can number. We do not celebrate the Eucharist *for* the blessed dead ; rather do we celebrate it *with* them. "Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory : Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High." What language can be too large to express the measure of this catholic adoration ?

THE "HISTORIC EPISCOPATE"

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SYNOPSIS

The term used by the Lambeth Conference—what does it mean ?

Characteristics of episcopal system in the early Church, election, government with counsel and consent of clergy and laity.

This was in principle the character of the medieval episcopal system—the Constitution of the Diocesan and Provincial Synods—the canonical theory of ecclesiastical law.

The Constitution of the Convocations of the English Provinces.

These principles maintained in the method of the Reformation in England, all change sanctioned by the clergy in Convocation, and by the laity in Parliament.

The "Historic Episcopate" in its Anglican form does not mean the absolute government of bishops, but a mixed government of bishops, clergy, and laity.

The unhappy effects of the government of the Church by the High Commission Court till the Long Parliament abolished it, and of the neglect of the Diocesan Synod.

The importance of the recommendations for constitutional reorganisation by the Archbishops' Committee on "Church and State."

THE "HISTORIC EPISCOPATE"[1]

There are signs that the attempts at the reconciliation of the Christian Churches in England may take more definite form in the near future: the correspondence which has appeared in the daily papers, the unofficial reports of conferences held by men representing the various Churches, the measure of real approximation and co-operation which the war has brought, both at the front and at home—all this indicates that the minds of Christian men are turning more and more to the thought of reunion, or at least of organised co-operation.

So far the negotiations have brought out very clearly that there is little difference between the Christian Churches in this country upon the main questions of the Christian faith; that there is no substantial difference between the Free Churchmen and those Anglicans who hold to the tradition and formularies of the Elizabethan settlement upon the nature of the sacraments and the ministry; but that there is a very real difference between the Free Churchmen and those Anglicans who represent the Tractarian tradition upon these latter questions. It is here that the difficulties arise, for

[1] The author must express his obligations to the editors of the *Contemporary Review* for their kindness in allowing him to reprint what has already appeared in their pages.

any attempt to ignore the principles of this great and justly honoured party of the Church could only end in the disruption of the Church of England, and it would be folly to attempt to heal one division in the Christian Church by measures which would at present inevitably produce another. But time and patience may find some way of overcoming these difficulties. In the meantime it may serve some useful purpose to inquire what is the real meaning of one of the terms which has been used in these discussions, what is the real meaning of that "Historic Episcopate" which the Lambeth Conference has put forward as one of the conditions on which reunion must be founded. It may be useful to inquire what this has meant in the past, and what it means to-day.

The Free Churches in England, in their method of organisation and government, speaking generally, represent the principle of the self-government of the Christian community, through representative ministers and laymen, while it is sometimes thought that the organisation of the Church of England and other Episcopal Churches represents the principle of the government of the Christian community by an order of men, the bishops, who stand above the community, and do not draw their authority from it. That is not the principle of the Church of England, nor of the pre-Reformation Catholic Church; that is not the principle of the "Historic Episcopate." The government of the Church of England is not vested in the Episcopate alone, but in the Convocations of the Provinces of Canterbury and York, and these Convocations are composed of two Houses, the House of Bishops

and the House of representative presbyters or ministers, and also in Parliament. What this means I shall have occasion to discuss later, but in the first place it will be necessary to inquire what were the historical antecedents of this Constitution.

I do not wish here to deal with the long controverted question whether the Christian Church was from the first governed by bishops, or whether this organisation represents a constitutional development of the sub-Apostolic period. I wish to begin from that time when the episcopal government was clearly generally established and recognised, and to ask first, what were the principles and methods of this episcopal system, as we can recognise it in the early Church.

In the first place, the bishop was the elected representative of the Christian community: he was not appointed from outside, but was chosen by the Christian community, lay and clerical, and without such election, without the authority of the Christian community, there was no bishop. In the second place, the bishop administered his diocese, not alone, but with the counsel and consent of the presbyters of the Church, and with the consent, at least, of the laity. The evidence, indeed, even of Cyprian alone is sufficient to make this clear. The episcopal government of the Church was not an autocratic or absolute government, but was that of one who was chosen by the people and clergy of the diocese, and who administered his diocese with the synodical authority of the clergy and also of the laity.

This was the character of the Constitution of the Church in its earlier ages within the ancient Roman

Empire, and this was the constitutional character of the Church in the Middle Ages. It is true that the normal constitution of the diocese of the Middle Ages, at least outside of Italy, differed very fundamentally from that of the early Church. The earlier diocese was urban; almost every town, large or small, had a bishop, and the diocese was, in point of area, population, and character, like the large modern parish. The normal medieval diocese was a great territorial area, and within this there grew up the various parishes. Little by little there developed those anomalous circumstances which added to the place and function of the bishop, as chief pastor and minister of the Christian community, the position of a great territorial nobleman, who ultimately, with the growth of the feudal system, came to have the same political and even military authority and responsibilities as the other feudal nobility. There was, it is true, no great change in the ecclesiastical and canonical conception of the office of a bishop, but in fact the medieval bishop was a very different person from the bishop of the early Church, and this development has left obvious traces in the actual character of the Episcopate to-day, and perhaps almost more in England than in any other European country.

And yet, with all this, the principles of the diocesan administration remained what they had been. The medieval bishop was not in canonical principle the absolute head of the Christian community, but remained its constitutional and representative head. He was still elected by the Christian people, clergy and laity; there were differences of opinion about the

exact place occupied by the lay people and by the clerical body in his election; but there was no doubt, until well on in the twelfth century, that each of these had their proper rights in that election and that these rights could not be neglected. One of the most important representatives of the Hildebrandine tradition, Geoffrey, the Abbot of Vendôme, said in the early years of the twelfth century: "In the ordaining of a bishop, election and consecration are in such a sense necessary; that consecration without election, or election without consecration, cannot alone make a bishop," and it was on this principle that the great controversy about "Investiture" turned. The principle which Hildebrand asserted against Henry IV was not that the bishop was to be elected by the clergy, or nominated by the Pope, but that he must be chosen by the Christian people—though no doubt he reserved the right of confirming the election to the other bishops and the Metropolitan, or the Pope.

The bishop, thus elected, administered the diocese with the counsel of his Diocesan Synod: it is no doubt true that in the vast areas of the medieval diocese, and before the great constitutional instrument of representation had been developed, the composition of the Diocesan Synod might be uncertain and fluctuating, but those who have followed in the canonical literature the history of the determined and persistent efforts of the medieval Church to maintain the regular meetings of the Diocesan Synod will not be disposed to undervalue the significance of the institution. And of the Diocesan Synod the members were not only the clergy, but in some sense also the laity.

The same principles held in regard to the administration and government of the larger area of the Ecclesiastical Province: no doubt the Metropolitan or Archbishop had large powers, though, indeed, these constantly varied, but the supreme authority of the province was the Provincial Synod, and in this again, while the Metropolitan and the bishop of the province were the first members, the presbyters and also the laity had their place. It is, indeed, this fact that explains the continual presence of members of all orders of the clergy, and of so many laymen, even in the Papal Councils. It is a great mistake when this is attributed to mere irregularity or carelessness, for all this is true not only in the troubled times of the tenth century, but also of the Councils held by those Popes who represented the reforming movement of which Hildebrand was the central figure.

There can be no reasonable doubt that in the Middle Ages the administrative authority of the Church was conceived of as residing not merely in the clerical body as a whole, but rather in the whole Christian community, in such a sense that in all important matters it was the whole community and not merely the bishops or clergy who were consulted.

The significance of all this is greatly heightened when we bear in mind the real nature of Church or Canon Law. Some parts of this were conceived of as having a direct Divine authority—those parts, that is, which represented the principles of "Natural Law," or were directly derived from the Holy Scriptures; but the great mass of the Canon Law had not this origin or this immutable character. The greater part

of the Canon Law was nothing else in the end but the custom of the Christian people, and Gratian of Bologna, the greatest master of the Canon Law, though a determined and convinced Papalist, did not hesitate to say that even Papal legislation had not the force of law unless it was accepted by the custom of the Christian people.

Such, then, were the constitutional principles of the medieval Church, and it is a very shallow historical judgment which imagines that this was mere theory. On the contrary, those who know anything of the actual history of the Middle Ages will know how closely this theory corresponded with the facts, how impotent even the greatest ecclesiastical authority proved to be when it neglected the general judgment of the Christian community, how empty and vain were the thunders of the interdict and the excommunication when these did not correspond with the actual circumstances and with the convictions of the Christian people.

No doubt in the later Middle Ages the place of the laity was in a considerable measure forgotten: the synodical organisation was conceived of more and more as representing the body of the clergy as distinguished from the laity, and the election of the bishop was restricted in fact to the clergy of the Cathedral Chapter; but this tendency represented partly convenience and partly the decay of the traditions proper to the early Church and the earlier Middle Ages. It is this, along with other constitutional conditions of the time, which explains how it was that when the constitutional machinery of the English Provinces of

Canterbury and York took definite shape in the thirteenth century in the Convocations of the two Provinces, it was the clergy alone who were summoned to attend through their representatives.

Such, then, was the character of the constitutional practice of the Church in England when under the Reformation settlement the English Church—that is, the two Provinces of York and Canterbury—were separated from the Roman obedience, and to understand the form assumed then by the "Historic Episcopate" in England this must be carefully borne in mind, while in order to understand the principles of the Reformed Church of England we must consider carefully how this great change was brought about.

The constitutional methods of the medieval Church were up to a certain point carefully observed, the separation from Rome and the establishment of the new order were sanctioned by the Convocations as representing the body of the clergy. We need not, for our purpose, inquire how far this was done voluntarily, how far under coercion; the forms were maintained, and the consent of the Christian community secured. A far-reaching change of method was, however, introduced; that is, all the proceedings of the new settlement were also sanctioned by Acts of Parliament: the principle, that is, was asserted that it was necessary that the lay representatives of the nation should give their authority and sanction to the acts of the clergy. It has not always been sufficiently considered what this really meant. It involved, some may say, a great change in the constitutional principles of the Church. I should myself rather say that it was an

assertion of the traditional and constitutional part taken by the laity in the government of the Church; but an assertion of their right under a new form—not necessarily a good one—but a form of immense and far-reaching significance. There has, indeed, been far too much talk about the supremacy of the Crown, and not nearly enough of the actual legal supremacy of Parliament. For this is what the Reformation Settlement and the Acts of Uniformity meant, that the lay people of England claimed a final and determining voice in the matter of Church legislation. If, therefore, we attempt to define the constitutional position of the Church of England since the Reformation, we must say that it is governed first by the bishops and clergy in their Convocations, but secondly by the laity of England in their Parliament. The "Historic Episcopate" in its Anglican form does not mean the absolute government of the bishops, but a mixed government of bishops, clergy, and laity.

It is for our present purpose important to observe that some at least of the Elizabethan divines were well aware of some aspects of this Constitution. In a letter written by Bishops Grindal and Horn to Bullinger and Gualter at Zurich, they repudiate the notion that "the whole management of Church government is in the hands of the bishops, although we do not deny but that a precedence is allowed them. For ecclesiastical matters of the sort are usually deliberated upon in Convocation, which is called together by royal edict, at the same time as the Parliament, as they call it, of the whole kingdom is held. The bishops are present, and also certain of the more learned of the clergy of the whole province, whose number is

three times as great as that of the bishops. These deliberate by themselves apart from the bishops, and nothing is determined or decided in convocation without the common consent and approbation of both parties, or at least of a majority. So far are we from not allowing the clergy to give their opinion in ecclesiastical matters of this kind." What the bishops describe was the actual Constitution of the Episcopal Church of England; the meaning of "Historic Episcopate" must be understood in this connection, and it is noticeable that in this sense the Zurich divines saw no difficulty in approving of episcopal government. It is in relation to this that we can understand the real significance of Archbishop Ussher's suggestion of a Constitution which should reconcile Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism.

How, then, has it come about that the government of the Church of England has been traditionally looked upon as that of autocratic bishops governing with no constitutional reference to the wishes of the clergy and people? I think that the answer is clear, and explains both the revolt against the bishops of the ancestors of the English Free Churches and the present weakness of episcopal government. The bishops were administratively independent of any diocesan organisation. Unhappily, no attempt was made for centuries to revive the diocesan synod, and the machinery which was devised for the exercise of the Royal Supremacy gave the bishops for nearly a hundred years a very arbitrary authority. The principal instrument of the Royal Supremacy was the High Commission Court, and as long as that existed, the bishop, who was on good terms with the Crown, possessed a very extensive and arbitrary authority.

This condition of things ended when the High Commission Court was abolished by the Long Parliament; the Restoration Parliament was careful not to revive it, and it was in part at least the attempt of James II to do this which brought about the Revolution and the downfall of the Stuarts. The disappearance of the High Commission Court left the bishops with little authority but that of enforcing the law; their administrative action apart from this is substantially limited to the powers of advice and counsel, and it is this which has given to the Church of England that anomalous character of being in name a consolidated Church system, but in fact often little more than an organised "independency." The bishops of the Church of England possess a great position; exercise, when they are men of piety and character, a great influence; but they have little or no authority, and the reason of this lies exactly in the isolated position which they occupy as being in no organic relation to the proper authority of the whole Christian community of the diocese. Autocratic authority in the long run, in ecclesiastical just as in political society, is weak or even impotent.

It is the greatest service that has been rendered by the Archbishops' Committee on "Church and State" that it has set out in clear and considered terms the principles of that reconstruction of the government of the Church of England towards which the Church has been moving during at least the last fifty years. Its suggestions as to the relations of the Church, thus reorganised, to the State are interesting and important: time alone can show whether they are practical; their real value is that they represent a

movement towards that liberty which a living society must obtain. But it is probably true to say that its recommendations for the constitutional reorganisation of the Church are more important still; they are, indeed, clearly the necessary conditions of the assertion and attainment of liberty, for certainly the lay people of England, represented in Parliament, would in no case hand over to a merely clerical body the control of the character and action of the Church of England.

It is under the terms of this proposed reconstruction that the phrase "The Historic Episcopate" must be understood. The acceptance of the "Historic Episcopate" would not mean the acceptance of the arbitrary, unrepresentative authority of the bishops, but the acceptance of a system of government representative of all orders in the Church, clerical and lay alike, in the parish, the diocese, the province and the nation, of which the bishops would be the administrative heads, representative of the judgment and will of the whole community, representative and therefore powerful and effective.

How far it may be true that, as some say, the Free Churches in England are themselves moving in the direction of some organisation of this sort I am not competent to say; but I venture to think that it is at least possible that many who would refuse to consider the acceptance of the Episcopate under its present conditions may be disposed to think somewhat differently of such a constitutional and representative system, which is also much nearer to the real meaning of the "Historic Episcopate" than that which has obtained during the last four centuries.

THE REFORMED EPISCOPATE

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SYNOPSIS

I. The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries.

(1) The Nature of the Unity of the Christian Church.
(2) The Need of Organisation.
(3) The Theory of the "Charismatic" Ministry.
(4) The Origin of the Threefold Ministry.
(5) The Necessary Basis of Reunion.

II. The Apostolic Succession and the Later Developments of the Episcopate.

(1) The Original Conception of the Apostolic Succession.
(2) The claims for the Episcopate by the Fathers.
(3) The Medieval Episcopate.
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(5) The Three Types of Ecclesiastical Polity.

III. The Basis for the Reunion of the Churches.

(1) A combination of the Three Types.
(2) A representative government, combining liberty and order.

IV. The Difficulty of Re-ordination.

(1) The Value of Ordination.
(2) The Way out of the Difficulty of Re-ordination.

The discussion has in view (1) on the one hand the fundamental principles of Nonconformity, and (2) on the other the position represented by the volume of *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, edited by Dr. Swete.

THE REFORMED EPISCOPATE

The purpose of this essay not only justifies, but even seems to demand, a frank statement of the position from which it is being written. As a Nonconformist, I hold that the enforcement of conformity in the Christian Church by the State is not only an error and a wrong against men, but a challenge of the sole sovereignty in His Church of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that even ecclesiastical authority within the Church must always be exercised with due regard to the rights of the individual conscience, and the liberty of the children of God in His Spirit. As a Congregationalist, I further hold that each congregation as the local manifestation of the one Church of Jesus Christ is competent, in constant and entire dependence on Christ, to discharge locally all the essential functions of the Church; but that, in order that the unity of the Church thus locally manifested may be preserved and expressed in the concord and co-operation of all congregations of believers, it not only may but ought, within certain limits, to surrender that liberty in the Spirit, and accept all such mutual obligations towards other Churches as may seem necessary and practicable for that sacred purpose. Confessing with true contrition of heart that there have

been human folly and sin in the way in which these convictions have been defended and enforced in times past, especially in the disregard of the chief Christian grace of love, nevertheless I cannot repudiate the past of the denomination and group of kindred denominations to which I belong; rather I do reverently claim their rich spiritual inheritance as a contribution which can worthily be offered to the abundant treasures of the re-united Christian Church, for which I hope and pray. In all that follows in this essay regarding the Episcopate, I am not aware of any lack of loyalty as a Nonconformist and Congregationalist, while I am no less moved by zeal as a Catholic Christian—at least in the wider sense of the word, which I am not prepared to surrender.

A few guiding principles may be very briefly stated. First of all, what is and ought always to be kept primary in the Christian Church is inspiration, participation in the community of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, while organisation is necessary, it must always be secondary and subordinate to and determined by the inspiration of the Gospel of Christ. Thirdly, in organisation there is no need of an absolute uniformity, but such differences should be allowed as do not hinder an effective unity in motive and action. Lastly, history teaches that there must be local and temporary adaptations of the organisation, so that in each age and land the Church may do its work and bear its witness in the way best fitted to fulfil the ends of the Kingdom of God.

I

(1) Most heartily do I welcome the recognition by Dr. Mason, in his essay on *Conceptions of the Church in early times*,[1] of the fact that the congregation of believers in each place was a church, as the local manifestation of the Church ; as this is the ground on which alone I can justify to myself the Congregational position. Agreeing with him also that in the Apostolic Age, no church would ever have thought even of separating itself from the fellowship of the other churches, I cannot conceive the unity of the Church as that of an external organisation, although rudimentary organs of witness, worship, and work there were, but as the community of the Spirit. I must agree with Dr. Hort, as against Dr. Mason, that the authority of the Apostles was "moral," depending on their personal relation to Christ, their witness to the Resurrection, the measure of their endowment by the Spirit, and their services to the Churches. It cannot with strict accuracy be called a corporate authority, as there was by no means entire agreement on all points ; witness St. Paul's language in the Epistle to the Galatians. This authority cannot be regarded as transferable, and as imposing any ecclesiastical organisation on the Church of Christ. It is the exercise of official authority in the Church without the personal qualifications for it that has wrought untold mischief in the past ; and the warning needs to be repeated in

[1] *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, by various writers, edited by H. B. Swete, D.D. (pp. 1–56).

the present. Nonconformity cannot and will not surrender its liberty in the Spirit for the kind of authority for bishops which in this essay is claimed for the Apostles, without, I believe, adequate historical justification.[1]

(2) While emphasising, as my understanding of the New Testament compels me to do, the principle that it is the one Gospel and the one Spirit which make the Church one, I fully recognise the need of organisation for the expression and protection of that unity. Most of the witness, worship, and work of the early Christian churches was maintained by the free exercise, with only the constraints and restraints of Christian love, of the manifold gifts bestowed by the one Spirit on the members of the one body of Christ. Yet steps towards organisation were soon taken because found necessary. The choice and call, training and appointment of the twelve Apostles were the first step taken by our Lord Himself. The election of the Seven to relieve the Twelve of the serving of tables was the next. It matters little whether we regard them as filling only a temporary office, or as the first of the order of deacons. We find that in the Church at Jerusalem elders were soon associated with James, the Lord's brother—the first to occupy a position similar to that of the monarchical bishop—who there played a quite exceptional *rôle* in the Apostolic Church. There is no indication of any divine command for this organisation of the Mother-church, and it is entirely explicable by current Jewish custom, as is also the setting apart

[1] For a further treatment of the subject, see below pp. 213f.

of those chosen for office by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Apostles. This act was not thought of as a communication of the Spirit, but as a corporate recognition of the use in the community of the gifts already possessed.[1] In Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas "appointed elders in every church" (Acts xiv, 23), although there is no mention of elders in the Church that had sent them forth (xv, 2). At Ephesus there were elders for whom Paul sent from Miletus, whose function it was to be overseers or bishops of God's Church (Acts xx, 17). In Philippians similar officers figure as *bishops* along with deacons (i, 1); and in the Pastoral Epistles we meet with bishops, or elders, and deacons.

(3) It may be freely acknowledged that Dean Robinson in his essay on *The Christian Ministry in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic periods*[2] has made out his case against Harnack's theory of a ministry of apostles, prophets, and teachers, distinguished from and superior to the *local* ministry of bishops or elders and deacons, in virtue of possession by the former of Spirit-gifts or *charismata*. All ministry in the Church was regarded as the exercise of a *charisma*, and there is no justification for restricting the term *charismatic* (a coined word, the use of which is undesirable) to describe any one kind of ministry as distinct from any other. On this subject, however, a few comments may be offered.

(*a*) St. Paul exalts prophecy and teaching not only

[1] See below pp. 203f.

[2] *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, pp. 57–92.

above healing and speaking with tongues, but also above *helps* and *governments,* the *charismata* qualifying for the administrative offices of elders or bishops and deacons (1 Corinthians xii, 28). We cannot get rid of the fact that he did set the specially-gifted ministry of the Word before the ministry of government; and it is to the loss of the Christian Church if at any period it departs from the apostolic valuation.

(*b*) While it is true that prophets were not appointed by any human instrumentality, as Dean Robinson concedes,[1] their actual authoritative ministry depended on the recognition of their gift by the Church conceived as a "Spirit-filled" community. Only in this case the recognition was tacit and informal, whereas in the case of elders or bishops it was expressed in the solemn form of election and ordination; for where the endowment by the Spirit was self-authenticating there was not the same need of verification by corporate recognition.[2]

(*c*) While Harnack's theory has been disproved, what has not been disproved is that in the New Testament the "*charisma*" or "Spirit-gift" is always insisted on as the essential condition for any ministry in the Christian Church. Hence to exalt organisation above inspiration is to abandon the New Testament standpoint. Consequently, the exclusive validity of "the threefold ministry" in the Christian Church throughout the ages cannot be so asserted as to leave no room for the prophet or the teacher whom God Himself may inspire, and whose Divine gift is self-witnessing in the spiritual effects of its exercise, apart from any

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 79. [2] See below p. 203.

human authorisation. If acceptance of the historical Episcopate involved any such consequence, then, dear as the reunion of Christendom is to me, I for one must withhold, however regretfully, my assent.

(4) In Dean Robinson's essay Lightfoot's explanation of the origin of the threefold ministry is said to be confirmed.[1] That explanation is now so familiar that it need not be repeated at any length; but a few special points must be noted.

(*a*) The use of the title *bishops* for the *presbyters* only in the Gentile churches offers an illustration of the principle laid down, that adaptation is characteristic of the organisation of the Church; for probably "the directors of religious and social clubs among the heathen were commonly so called," and this designation was given to "the presiding members of the new society," if not by "the Gentile Christians themselves," at least by "their heathen associates." The synonym "presbyter," however, still remained in use, and became again, as it had been at first, the sole designation of the Christian elder as soon as "the term bishop was appropriated to a higher office in the Church." [2]

(*b*) Most important of all, however, is the endorsement of Lightfoot's statement that "the Episcopate was formed, not out of the apostolic order by localisation, but out of the presbyteral by elevation." [3] To the subject of Apostolic Succession we must return; but this statement deprives of any historical support the assumption that the Apostles, having received a distinctive spiritual endowment apart from the Christian

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 58. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 84.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

community, transferred that to the bishops, in the succession of whom alone it is being transmitted in the Church from age to age.

(*c*) In explanation of this development, Dean Robinson adds to Lightfoot's statement two considerations: "First, the intercourse between one church and another would tend to throw responsibility upon a single prominent individual representing the interests of the community and speaking or writing in its name; and the same person would naturally receive travelling brethren from other churches and provide them with the necessary hospitality; and this again would presuppose that the funds of the church were largely at his disposal. But, secondly, a yet more important factor in developing a single office of supreme eminence is to be found in the growth of the Eucharist as the principal liturgical service of the Church. . . . We shall probably be right in laying more stress upon presidency at the Eucharist than on presidency at any council which may be assumed to have existed for the general management of local church affairs."[1]

(*d*) Regarding this development several comments from the Nonconformist standpoint may be offered. First of all, the Nonconformist pastor holds a position in most respects similar to that of the primitive bishop. Secondly, the administrative functions referred to are generally most wisely not retained by the pastor, but entrusted to a lay officer. Thirdly, while presidency at the Eucharist is normally reserved for the pastor, it is not to this, but rather to his conduct of the worship,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 87.

and especially to his preaching of the Gospel, that most importance is attached. Yet, after all, the acceptance of the Episcopate as so far described need cause no difficulty to the Nonconformist: it is later developments towards Episcopacy proper that he must regard with more critical eye.

(*e*) The bishop of the Ignatian Epistles (*c.* 110–117 A.D.), the earliest evidence for a single rather than a collective episcopate, was the minister of one local church. So also was the Cyprianic bishop, even if subordinate congregations were now attached to the principal congregation in some cases; and Cyprian asserted the independence of each bishop, that is, the autonomy of each church, under his rule. The unity of the whole Church for him resided in the whole episcopate; and yet each bishop as representing his own church was independent. It is not as a matter of antiquarian interest that these considerations are being urged, but for a very practical purpose. An episcopal organisation which disregarded the autonomy of the separate congregation, within the limits which the recognition of that congregation as the local manifestation of the one Church of Jesus Christ imposes, could not be made tolerable to Congregationalists, nor would it be justified by the New Testament and even the early history of the Christian Church.

(5) The conclusion to which this discussion leads raises the fundamental issue of the necessary basis of reunion. Congregationalist as I am, I agree with Dean Robinson that "we need now, as much as the Apostolic Age needed, a ministry which can hold the whole Church together." I do not desire "a congre-

gational independence, which subordinates the minister, and which aims at offering examples of the corporate life on a limited scale without reference to the larger corporate life of the One Body of the Christ," or "any system of local independence, on however large a scale, which tries to live, so to speak, in the Apostles' age without the unifying control of the Apostles." Although, in correspondence with what has already been said, I should in the last clause for "of the Apostles" substitute the phrase "of the One Gospel and the One Spirit," I do value his admission that even congregational independence does represent the truth, for which at the beginning of this essay I have contended, "that each group or community of Christians is *pro tanto* representative of the One Body; and indeed the corporate life is more easily exemplified on the smaller scale."[1] I can accept the statement he makes in support of the threefold ministry, even in the later sense of the terms which he has in view. "It is for the unity of the whole that the Historic Threefold Ministry stands. It grew out of the need for preservation of unity when the Apostles themselves were withdrawn. . . . This is not to say that a particular doctrine of Apostolic Succession must needs be held by all Christians alike. But the principle of transmission of ministerial authority makes for unity."[2]

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 91. [2] P. 92.

II

(1) We must now turn to the crucial subject of the Apostolic Succession. The discussion of *The Original Conception* by Dr. C. H. Turner[1] must have brought relief to others, as to myself, who care for the lessening of the difficulties in the way of Christian reunion. As here presented the Apostolic Succession does not appear an insuperable obstacle. Against the dangers of the Gnostic movement, appeal was made to the Apostolic traditions in the threefold form of the Creed, the Scriptures, and the succession of bishops in the churches tracing their history to an apostolic origin.

(*a*) It is not in connection with any personal endowment of any bishop, but with his representative position in a Christian community, that the succession is at first thought of; and the appeal is not to one church, however eminent, but to the consent of all the churches, to successions of bishops, not to one succession.

(*b*) To be in the Apostolic Succession a bishop needed a double qualification—"a right relation to the local church, of which he claimed to have been constituted the head, and a right relation to the whole Church, of the Episcopate of which he claimed to have been constituted a member."[2] He must be the recognised occupant of the *cathedra* of a church, and have been properly ordained thereto.

(*c*) Up to this stage of the development, *i.e.*, to the beginning of the third century, the theory of Apostolic

[1] *Essays*, etc., pp. 93–142. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 107.

Successions need not cause difficulty to a Nonconformist. The new claim for the bishop as "successor of" the Apostles, made by Hippolytus, must at once be challenged as without any historical justification. Cyprian in the West and Firmilian in the East follow in the same path as Hippolytus, and shift the emphasis from the individual relation of the bishop to his church to the "common relation of the episcopal order to the Church Catholic."[1] Against this "shifting of the emphasis" very serious objections must be urged. First of all, the episcopate becomes an *order* of the universal Church, distinct from the presbyterate, self-continuing, and self-asserting, instead of an office, that of *presiding* elder in a local church, depending on and representative of it. Secondly, in consequence, the truth already insisted on that each congregation is the local manifestation of the one Church becomes obscured; and the unity of the Church comes to consist exclusively in the order of the episcopate. Thirdly, the Christian people, as constituting the Spirit-filled community in each place, falls into the background, and the bishop, as the channel and guarantee of the continued presence and activity of the Spirit in the Church, is thrust into the forefront. With a conception of the Apostolic Succession which involves such consequences, Nonconformists can make no compromise; but assent to it is not in any way involved in acceptance of the more original type of the Historic Episcopate down to the end of the second century, and much later too in many parts of the Church. It is the Christian Church of laity as well

[1] P. 131.

as clergy, and of the clergy only as representing and discharging their functions on behalf of the laity, which is in the Apostolic Succession which continues the Gospel and the Spirit of the Apostolic Age in the world.

(2) In accepting as wholesome and legitimate the elevation of one presbyter as *primus inter pares*, to be the guiding and controlling officer of each church, there is not involved "unfeigned assent" to the claims on behalf of the bishop made by the Fathers. Ignatius was concerned for the unity of the Christian fellowship under the bishop, and not for any theory of orders. He "says nothing of ordination or Apostolic Succession, but assumes a sort of Divine providential selection of bishops, as does Cyprian later on."[1] What Irenaeus insists on is the value of bishops as the links in the chain of the Apostolic tradition.

(*a*) "Tertullian," says Archbishop Bernard in his essay on *The Cyprianic Doctrine of the Ministry*,[2] "is the first writer, so far as we know, who applies the term *sacerdos* to the Christian minister," and yet he regards laymen also as *sacerdotes*. "The difference between Christian layman and Christian priest is not a difference of caste, but is due to the authority of the Christian society itself, which has made the distinction. The laity are the *plebs*, the clergy are the *ordo* or senatorial order."[3] It is to be observed that Tertullian uses *presbyter* and *sacerdos* interchangeably; it being the presbyter's office to perform the *sacerdotalia munera*, the bishop is, for him, the *summus sacerdos*,

[1] *Christianity in History*, by Bartlet & Carlyle, p. 303, note.
[2] *Essays*, etc., pp. 215–262. [3] P. 221.

as the Jewish High Priest was called of old. In view of subsequent developments the application of the term *sacerdos* must be regarded as a departure, fraught with mischief, from the New Testament standpoint of Christ as "the High Priest of our confession," and of the priesthood of all believers. The analogy of the Old Testament priesthood can only mislead. The Epistle to the Hebrews uses it to show that what the Levitical system could not do, Christ has finally and perfectly done. Afterwards it was used to bring the Church back to "the weak and beggarly elements" of ritual ordinances which Christ had fulfilled and abolished. The Old Testament priesthood was hereditary, and so independent of the people to whom it ministered. If the Christian bishop is not the successor of the Apostles, and so the Apostolic authority has not devolved upon him; if, in fact, he was elevated from among his fellow-presbyters, and they as well as he were elected by the people, surely the correct inference is that his authority is delegated to him by the priestly people. Not the autocratic but the representative principle seems to be proper in a "Spirit-filled" community.

(*b*) This disastrous tendency was, however, carried still further by Cyprian, who departs from Tertullian's usage in this respect, that, as a general rule, he reserves the term *sacerdos* for a bishop as distinct from a presbyter, although the presbyters share in the sacerdotal dignity. "By the *collegium sacerdotale* Cyprian means the College of bishops."[1] "It is rather as rulers of the Church than as its teachers that Cyprian

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

conceives of himself and of his brethren in the episcopate."[1] Nevertheless he recognises that the people should have a voice in the election of the bishop, and that, even if he be lawfully consecrated by his fellow bishops, misconduct on his part will justify a repudiation of his rule by the people. While the presbyters were consulted, he yet always regarded himself as having by divine right "a distinct office and an authoritative voice."[2]

(*c*) Asserting as he did the absolute authority of the bishop in his own church, Cyprian no less insisted on the independence of each bishop, though he also recognised the value of mutual consultation, and regarded the unity of the Church as vested in the collective episcopate. Inasmuch as a bishop was minister of one church, this, as has already been pointed out, is in principle congregational independency. It is true that a church in one place might consist of a central congregation and dependent congregations in the city itself or the country around it; but this state of matters obtains in Congregational, Baptist, and especially Methodist churches, which present a far greater resemblance to the sphere of authority of the Cyprianic bishop than does the modern diocese. At this stage of development, when each city (*civitas*) was regarded as having one church and one bishop, and each congregation was placed under the care of a presbyter as the bishop's deputy, a presbyteral polity would have been a possible alternative, as each worshipping unit or congregation might have had its own bishop or presbyter and all the bishops or presby-

[1] P. 229. [2] P. 234.

ters might have been on an equality. There was no inherent necessity why the monarchy of the bishop in his own church, when consisting of one congregation, should have been transferred to the bishop when his church became a group of congregations. The circumstances of the Church, exposed to heresy, schism, and persecution, as well as the political conditions of the Roman Empire, doubtless had their decisive influence on the development; but that is not a reason why imitation of that organisation should be regarded as a binding obligation on the Church in all lands and ages. The principle of the relativity of all historical values must here be insisted upon. What has emerged in history may again be submerged in history.

(3) The Episcopate in the Middle Ages, which is the true parent of modern episcopacy, differed from that of the earlier centuries in the huge size of the diocese and the different culture of the clergy, especially the superior clergy, from that of the Christian people as a whole.[1]

No one can seriously desire the perpetuation of these conditions. The modern diocese is too large for effective administration, and especially for that personal contact of bishop, clergy, and people without which authority becomes official, and not personal, as in the Christian Church all authority ought to be. The feudal lord is out of place in the Church, even more than in the civil society of to-day. This does not mean that we can or must go back to the diocese of

[1] For a fuller treatment of this subject the reader may be referred to Dr. Carlyle's essay in the present volume. See also *Christianity in History*, p. 362.

Cyprian's day. Nonconformists have County Associations, and Baptists and Congregationalists recognise the necessity of a wider area of administration. The Baptists already have, and the Congregationalists aim at having, superintendents of large districts including several of the smaller counties. Not ancient precedents, but present necessities, should determine the extent of a diocese.

(4) Presbyterianism was first among Reformed Church systems to claim the *jus divinum* for itself, and by it Episcopacy was rejected on principle, and not from mere expediency as in Lutheranism. In England, Reformed Episcopacy did not at first claim for itself *jus divinum*, and it was only slowly that the Anglican Church in practice ceased communion with its sister-Churches on the Continent. As its more conservative instincts led it "to favour episcopacy even in the diocesan form, due largely to medieval conditions—which seemed also best to accord with personal monarchy—it went its own way in this matter, yet without treating the orders of other Protestant churches as invalid."[1] Within the Church of England Puritanism sought to conform the Church more completely to the divine pattern as disclosed in "the inspired record of the Apostolic Church." Its own model was church life in Geneva and other Reformed Churches, *i.e.* the Presbyterian order and discipline. As long as it was tolerated, it remained within the Church in the hope of leavening the whole lump. The failure to realise the Puritan ideal within the Church of England led some earnest spirits to

[1] *Christianity in History*, pp. 506–7.

form religious communities outside it. Thus Voluntaryism or Separatism emerged. While Robert Browne, the first exponent of Independency or Congregationalism, did recognise a duty of the civil magistrate to the Church to care for its purity, yet the refusal of the State, acting through the authorities of the Church, to make the Reformation as thorough as they desired led others, including Baptists, to the conviction of the autonomy not only of the Church in relation to the State, but also of each congregation meeting for mutual Church fellowship. Brotherly relations with other congregations holding the same convictions were maintained; but "no coercive authority of a collective kind" was recognised. This independence of the State, and even of any collective ecclesiastical authority, was asserted in order to maintain the spirituality and purity of Church-fellowship, in direct dependence on Christ as sovereign head.

(5) As a result of the Reformation three types of ecclesiastical polity emerge, the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and the Congregational, each claiming the authority of the Scriptures. The previous discussion justifies the conclusion that no form of polity can claim exclusive validity on the grounds of Apostolic doctrine and practice. While Episcopacy for long ages held universal sway and has been of high value in maintaining a certain unity and continuity in the Church, if not always by the wisest method and in a fully Christian spirit, yet the history of its development shows that it cannot be claimed as the pure product of Divine Providence, but that many human factors, not all equally worthy, have made it what it

now is. It has tended to subordinate the functions of the Christian people and the rest of the Christian ministry too much to the rule of the bishop, and in alliance with the Civil Government has largely fostered even the subordination of the Church to the State. Its rejection by some of the Churches of the Reformation was due to two entirely worthy motives, viz., (1) the desire to recover the New Testament ideal of the Church, and (2) antagonism to the action of the bishops as the agents of the State in enforcing repugnant doctrines and practices. It is much to be deplored that controversy and not conciliation ultimately prevailed, and so Protestantism was left divided. Taking all the conditions which led to these divisions into account, is it historically justifiable for any one type of church polity to claim that it alone has a valid or even a regular ministry, and that it must treat the ministry of all other types as schismatical, irregular, or invalid? The Church of England since the Reformation has never by the voice of authority advanced any such pretension. Precedents and practices of the first Christian centuries cannot be appealed to as decisive of present obligation, in view of the fundamental revolution in the conditions which resulted from the Reformation; and the Church to-day must make a fresh start on the basis of the whole Christian past, including its primitive and modern stages as well as the intervening patristic and medieval ones.

III

(1) If the Church of Jesus Christ is to live, not in the bondage of the letter, but in the freedom of the Spirit; if it still enjoys the inspiration of God, so that it may adapt its organisation to its historical environment in order that it may more effectively bear its witness and do its work in the world, then its primary duty to-day is to ask itself: What kind of a Church does the world need? Can there be any doubt about the answer? What it needs is a united and not a divided Church, and a Church so organised in its unity that it will be able to deal effectively with the complexity of modern society. To that end the unity must be not simple but complex. In what sense the autonomy of the congregation, as the local manifestation of the one Church, must be maintained has already been indicated; but the need of wider units of organisation has also been recognised in Congregationalism in the formation of County and National Unions, which are exercising an ever-increasing influence over the churches. The proposal to have superintendents, already adopted by the Baptist churches, and under consideration by the Congregationalists, shows this same tendency. A voluntary surrender of absolute independence in the exercise of all functions that can be most effectively discharged in alliance with other churches, is not a betrayal of principle, but a use of liberty in the service of love. If Congregationalism, however, still lacks something as regards the relation of the local congregations to one another, Episcopacy as it now is in

England lacks something as regards the local congregation itself, so that it may be in the fullest sense a fellowship of the Spirit. The Christian people have not that share in the administration of the Church which not only ancient precedent in the Church, but even permanent principles of the Christian faith, demand. It may be said without offence that the Church of England is to-day the poorer morally and religiously in the measure in which it ignores the autonomy of the local congregation. The fulfilment of Christ's promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew xviii, 20), is disregarded to its loss by any ecclesiastical organisation. The unity of the whole in its parts will be realised in the measure in which the whole is recognised as in each of the parts: the one Church in all the churches. Further, the functions of the spiritual priesthood of all believers cannot without immeasurable loss be handed over in their entirety to one class of officers. The deacon in the Church of England has ceased to be what in the earliest period he was, and the presbytery in the one church has shrunk to be one presbyter. The Presbyterian church which has its minister or leading elder, its session of elders associated with him in the spiritual oversight of the congregation, and its deacons or managers looking after what for want of a better name are called the secular affairs of the church, its finances, buildings, etc., is nearer the primitive type than the Episcopal congregation of to-day; yet in so far as it has only an annual meeting of its members, and reserves for the officers almost the entire control, it

lacks something of completeness, and that Congregationalism has in its church-meeting. If, again, the moderator of the presbytery were not appointed temporarily, but became a permanent official with the title *bishop*, this would be an organisation which would, with the necessary mutual limitations, combine episcopal authority, presbyteral equality, and congregational liberty. Church Meeting, Court of Deacons, 'Kirk' Session of Elders, Presbytery of Ministers and Elders, Synod of Bishops, Ministers, and Elders, would yield a gradation of direction and control in the Christian Church which would preserve it from anarchy on the one hand and autocracy on the other. I do not offer this as more than a very tentative suggestion, as need of mutual adjustment of functions would on closer scrutiny be discovered ; it is only a provisional indication of the kind of development by which the Church might take up into itself all the organs and functions which have proved their right to existence.

(2) The officers of the churches and of the Church should be elected by and representative of the Christian people. Even in the election of bishops, ministers and people as well as bishops should have some share. Appointment by the State—albeit a recognition of the interes of the laity in the government of the Church—is a most clumsy and objectionable device for a desirable object, which can be secured much more effectively and properly in another way. The recognition of the officers of the Church by ordination by the officers already so ordained, seems to me a legitimate and desirable safeguard of order in the Church, to preserve its liberty from degenerating into

licence. To give to the bishops the place they have hitherto held in respect of the ordination of ministers, so long as, in accordance with ancient practice, other presbyters are associated with them, would be simply to preserve the continuity in the Christian Church which anyone with a proper historic sense would desire. This, however, must not be held to involve any theory of the exclusive validity of episcopal ordination, *e.g.*, on the ground of Apostolic Succession in the Episcopate. What functions shall be assigned to the people and the clergy—each congregation, and the associations of these congregations, in presbyteries or dioceses, deacon, elder, minister and bishop—must not be determined exclusively by former custom in any of the churches re-united, although due regard indeed must here be given to the teaching of history as to what has proved most effective. But the general principle must govern that liberty shall be allowed as far, but only as far, as order allows; for independence must be subordinated to unity, a Christian unity in the Spirit, not one of the old law, but of the new life in Christ Jesus. To expect a simple submission of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism to Episcopacy, as it now is, is simply to follow "a will-o'-the-wisp" which will lead to bogs of useless controversy and endanger all reconciliation. Each denomination must recognise its own imperfections; and each must be encouraged to bring its own distinctive treasures of witness, worship, work, doctrine, ritual, polity, into the common treasury for the enrichment of all.

IV

(1) As we must face all the facts, it is necessary to deal in closing with the vexed question of re-ordination of all ministers not episcopally ordained. While as a revolt against certain views of ordination, regarded as superstitious, some Nonconformists have been opposed to and have refused ordination, it is now the universal custom in the Nonconformist Churches to ordain ministers, if here and there some irregularity still survives in the arrangements for ordination. In Congregationalism generally, for instance, it is now required that the County Union should be represented at the ordination. I think I am speaking for the general mass of Nonconformity when I say that there is a growing desire to give full recognition to the principle of the unity of the Church, and the continuity of its ministry in the method of ordination. As an Apostolic practice, if it has not the authority of the sacraments, as from the Lord Himself, it may be regarded as a sacred obligation. Any theory about it which would go beyond what we have seen to be the primitive conception of it—a corporate recognition of the grace-gift, investing with the authority of the Church the exercise of that gift within the Christian community—would not, however, be accepted generally. The experience of Christian ministers at their own ordination justifies the assertion that this corporate recognition has brought to them not only the assurance of the presence of the "grace-gift" for the ministry, but even an increase thereof, a fresh

enthusiasm for and a further energy in their ministry. It has proved to them sacramental, not only the symbol but even the channel of grace. To ordination by a bishop, if presbyters were associated with him, for those who had not been already ordained, as a matter of Church order, I do not think serious objection need be taken ; but a necessary transmission of grace by the bishop's hands exclusively—or indeed by any hands—would not be accepted by Nonconformists as a tenable doctrine.

(2) As regards re-ordination, it is not *amour propre* that forbids us as Nonconformists entertaining the proposal even for a moment. The demand itself betrays for us so false a view of the constitution of the Christian Church and the relation of Christ to those whom He has called to the ministry of His Gospel, that we should be surrendering the truth as we hold it, if we submitted. It is Christ's will, the call of the Christian people, and the confirmation of that call by the representatives of the other churches in the common fellowship, which give full validity to any ministry. To insist on episcopal re-ordination is not to maintain an order in the Church consistent with Christian liberty, but to lapse into bondage to traditions and conventions which can claim no exclusive validity.

(*a*) If we were bent on controversy, we could reply with a *tu quoque*. We could point out that the modern episcopate in the Church of England is repudiated as regards validity by the Church of Rome. Further, as tested by the Ignatian or Cyprianic episcopate, it is itself irregular ; for appointment by the Crown is surely a very wide departure from election by, and

representation of, the Christian ministry and people, and a departure which cannot be justified as a progressive development in the direction of approximation to the ideal of the Christian Church. If the Christian Church is a Spirit-filled community, it must surely under the guidance of the Spirit choose the organs through which it will discharge its functions. The proposal of conditional re-ordination seems to me an unworthy device, as challenging the reality of a religious experience. Neither can I satisfy myself regarding the other proposal—mutual re-ordination, even although to some Nonconformists it does seem tolerable on Christian principles, as a matter of giving fresh jurisdiction on both sides.

(*b*) Are we driven in this matter to a *non possumus ?* For those who accept the Reformation as a necessary and legitimate revolt against the abuses of Roman Catholicism, it should be impossible to regard the ministry of any of the Protestant Churches as irregular or invalid. The grounds on which the schism with Rome was justified must equally justify the other schisms within Protestantism, although there was not the same absolute historical necessity for them. An honest and serious appeal to Scripture is here common ground. Past recognition of the orders of other Protestant Churches by the Church of England, so familiar that no evidence need here be offered of it, should be sufficient for her loyal sons. But if loyalty to what is deemed the Catholic principle seems to demand the disregard of this precedent, an argument may be offered which it is hoped may have some weight. Let us go back to the early centuries. Dr.

Turner summarises a whole section of his discussion of *The Problem of Non-Catholic Orders* thus : "In particular, Orders conferred outside the Church were universally rejected, partly (*a*) because none who had been put to public penance could either receive or exercise Holy Orders, partly (*b*) on the ground that the Holy Spirit could not be given, either in Confirmation or Ordination, save within the Church. With the growth of divisions in the fourth century came the desire to stretch every available point in the interests of peace (i) where there was no formally organised schism, by giving the separated clergy, when reconciled, authority to minister ; (ii) where there was organised separation, by re-ordaining the clergy on reconciliation." [1] When course (i) or (ii) was adopted, (*a*) was totally ignored. Are the advocates of re-ordination prepared rigidly to uphold (*b*) and to deny the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit in all the non-episcopal communions in such a sense as would make them parts of the Church of Christ ? "By their fruits ye shall know them." Is Christian experience, character, influence, service, confined to episcopal communities ? In fact, do the modes of thought belonging to Catholic controversy in the early ages of the Church apply to the present situation ? The Church itself, under the lead of Augustine, modified the earlier and cruder forms and applications, when faced with the new conditions presented by an equally divided mass of Christians in North Africa. Should it not modify them still further to-day ? If the Anglo-Catholic reply be in the negative, I could not accept the re-

[1] *Essays*, etc., p. 94.

sponsibility of endorsing it by accepting such demands. But in view of the conditions in Roman Catholicism itself at the Reformation, and the positive ideals and fruitful history of the non-Episcopal Protestant Churches, can any impartial historical judgment regard them simply as "formally organised schism"? If so, then—to say nothing more—"the desire to stretch every available point in the interests of peace" might lead in the twentieth century, as it did in the fourth, to action in keeping with Augustine's governing principle in the solution of the problem. For him "all sacraments duly administered outside the Church were valid, although the real benefit of them only accrued on union with the Church." [1] "It is the disposition of the recipient that matters; where his disposition is wrong, they are received incompletely."[2] Was the disposition of all ministers not episcopally ordained wrong? Still more, is it wrong to-day? If not, is their ordination not valid, even if from the Catholic standpoint incomplete?

(*c*) I need hardly say that this is an *argumentum ad hominem;* to me such reasoning does not appeal, because I do not share its presuppositions. We must not, however, make too much of this problem of re-ordination. *Solvitur ambulando.* Let the Churches go on seeking unity, and the Spirit of God will come in such Pentecostal power of contrition for the past, consecration in the present, and confidence for the future, that none shall dare to challenge the Holy Unction. By God's own truth and grace in the Church of Christ there will be so new a creation, that the old things will pass away, and all things will become new.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 94. [2] P. 145.

UNIVERSAL PRIESTHOOD

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SYNOPSIS

Priesthood in the Old Testament and in Judaism—Christian emphasis almost exclusively on sacrificial aspect—Large neglect of priestly category in the New Testament very striking—New Testament definitions of the priesthood of Christ and of Christians—The priesthood of Christ unique in kind—The Eucharist a sacrifice, but not a sin-offering—The identification of the elements with the body and blood of Christ neither Biblical nor primitive—The sacrifices offered by the Christian priesthood—The claim that the ministry possesses a specific priesthood not necessarily associated with a particular type of organisation—Twofold form of this claim: a vicarious priesthood, and a representative priesthood—What such a priesthood involves—Rejection of the claim implies no indifference to the value of the ministry—Complete silence of the New Testament as to a priesthood of the ministry as distinct from the laity—The explanation that silence is due to universal recognition paradoxical and unwarrantable—Silence due rather to the fact that no priesthood exclusive to the ministry was recognised—The view that ministers were priests in a sense in which laymen were not, a relatively late development—Apostolic Succession has changed its meaning from that which the term originally bore—A mediatorial priesthood of the ministry foreign to the genius of the Christian religion—The theory of a representative priesthood less objectionable but less self-consistent—It goes behind the Church for its commission along exclusively ministerial channels—But a worthy conception of the Church must claim for the Body of Christ the right out of its own Divinely granted resources to create a valid ministry—The ministry possesses essentially no priesthood which does not belong to the laity—The layman may at the call of the Church exercise ministerial functions—As a matter of order special functions may be normally reserved to the ministry—But the sacerdotal essence of the Church is not localised and concentrated in any Order.

UNIVERSAL PRIESTHOOD

I

It would probably serve no useful purpose were we to approach our subject through a study of priesthood in non-Biblical religions, fascinating though such a study would be. The sense which the term bore for the primitive Church was determined by its use in the Old Testament and contemporary Judaism.[1] The history of the priesthood in Israel is not easy to follow, and it will be differently written by those who undertake the task with different critical presuppositions. That, however, though very important in itself, is of less moment for us, since the New Testament writers took the Old Testament as it stood, and in particular never doubted that the priesthood as described in the

[1] No definition of priesthood can be constructed which would be universally applicable. In the report of the "Oxford Conference" Dr. Sanday says: "The leading idea of Priesthood appears to be consecration for liturgical service, especially sacrifice. This sense seems to be constant, though the nature of the service and the matter of the sacrifice vary with the phase of religion to which they belong" (*Different Conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice*, p. 16). The Levitical idea is defined by Dr. Fairbairn thus: "We may define the priesthood as a community of men endowed with the threefold function of mediation, expiation and absolution" (*ibid.*). On p. 72 he speaks of mediation as "the first and essential function of priesthood." Dr. Salmond, speaking both of Old Testament

ritual legislation of the Pentateuch had been in existence from the time when the Hebrews sojourned in the wilderness. In their application of the idea to Christian doctrine and worship it was on one particular function of priesthood that the emphasis lay. It is on this aspect that, in the history of Christendom, attention has been almost exclusively concentrated. For the duties of the priesthood, as defined in the Old Testament, were of a varied character. Judicial functions were entrusted to the priests. It was theirs to pronounce whether the man suspected of leprosy was or was not clean. To them the oracle belonged, which men consulted to discover the will of God, or learn whether their enterprise would prosper. They uttered the blessing on the people, bore the Ark, shared in the service of the sanctuary, and offered incense and sacrifice upon the altar. It is this sacrificial function which the New Testament writers have in mind when they speak of priesthood in their own religion.

The Epistle to the Hebrews represents Christ as our great High Priest, who, having suffered without

and New Testament, says: "The general idea of a 'priest' is that he is one who 'draws near to God,' who in doing so brings gifts and offerings, and who does this in particular for others, so that they find access to God through him" (p. 80). The emphasis on mediation is interesting for its bearing on the nature of the Christian priesthood, as distinct from that of Christ. Canon Scott Holland, commenting on the expression "Every man his own priest," says: "Is not that a contradiction in terms? A priest is one essentially who acts on behalf of another" (p. 155). This seems to be a serious over-statement, but it indicates clearly where the emphasis lies, and also the perils of its use.

the pale, presented His blood to God in the Heavenly sanctuary, as the High Priest brought the blood of the animal victim into the earthly Holy of Holies. This office of Christ is set forth with much more elaboration than is given to the type of Christian priesthood which specially concerns us. Here the relevant passages are 1 Peter ii, 5, 9; Rev. i, 6, v, 10, xx, 6. These passages go back to the Old Testament and claim for the Church and its members prerogatives and duties which had been assigned to Israel. This transference from Israel to the Church rested on the conviction that the Church was the true Israel, the nation having forfeited its right to the title and its privileges through its rejection of Christ. Christians were God's people, the Church was the Israel of God (Gal. vi, 16; Rom. ix, 6–8; Phil. iii, 3). The fundamental passage is Ex. xix, 5, 6. Israel is here selected from the other nations as a people peculiarly God's own, which shall be to Him "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."[1] It is not clear whether in speaking of Israel as "a kingdom of priests" the writer meant that Israel exercised priestly functions on behalf of the other nations. Probably this is not intended, Israel being simply represented as qualified for direct access to and service of God. In Is. lxi, 5, 6, however, Israel is apparently regarded as holding a mediatorial priesthood between God and the Gentiles.

In view of the immense significance attached in the

[1] By "kingdom of priests" it is not intended that they are kings and priests, but that they constitute a realm in which all the citizens are priests. The Septuagint rendering, however, has influenced the New Testament writers who regard Christians as both kings and priests.

later history of the Church to the idea of priesthood, it is very striking that so little is said of it in the classical documents of our religion. The interpretation of our Lord's work in terms of priesthood is practically restricted to the Epistle to the Hebrews. The priesthood of Christians is explicitly recognised only in 1 Peter and the Apocalypse, and in these simply by a transference to the Church of language used in the first instance about the people of Israel. But for Ex. xix, 6, it may be questioned whether it would have found a place in the New Testament at all, and nowhere is the term applied to the Christian minister as contrasted with the Christian layman. When we remember the relative paucity of utterances on the significance of His death preserved to us from the teaching of Jesus, the absence of the priestly terminology need not surprise us. But it is remarkable that Paul, whose teaching on this subject is so full and many-sided, and to whom this category (especially in view of his use of sacrificial language) would so naturally have presented itself, always avoids it. Had the Epistle to the Hebrews failed to secure inclusion in the Canon, the very valuable interpretation of our Lord's work as the achievement of our great High Priest could never have gained the place it has held in Christian theology. Yet, while this thought is limited to a single book, it is one of the writer's dominant conceptions and is worked out with remarkable fulness and power. In this respect it stands in striking contrast to the thought of the priesthood of Christians, which occurs only incidentally in two writings, and these not among the more notable, and in these simply as

designations derived from an Old Testament conception of Israel, which receive no further elaboration and seem to have exercised but little influence on the thought of the writers. In saying this I am not contending that the doctrine is negligible for us; I am simply calling attention to the actual fact.

II

What then is the nature of priesthood in the Christian religion? It is closely connected with sacrifice. The priest is one who ministers in a sanctuary and has somewhat to offer. His office is conferred by Divine appointment, not filled by self-election. When he acts for others he must be gifted with a sympathy which will enable him to enter by imagination into their condition and realise the strain to which human infirmity is subjected by temptation. These conditions were satisfied by Christ, Who was appointed to His office by God and, so far from seeking it, shrank from it in the extremity of distress; Who offered a sacrifice, Himself at once the victim and the priest; Who knew to the uttermost the pressure and seduction of temptation and therefore could effectively sympathise with His brethren in their weakness; Who ministers, a priest for ever, in the Heavenly sanctuary, where He presented His blood to God and then sat down at His right hand.

When from the consideration of our Lord's priesthood we turn to the priesthood of Christians, we are conscious at once of a difficulty. For it is obvious that the representation of Christ as our High Priest

is altogether fitting and greatly enriches the interpretation of His work given to us in other parts of the New Testament. But if the priest must have "somewhat to offer," if he is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, how are we to say that the Christian Church or its members can be rightly called a priesthood within the terms of that definition? Is there more than a mere metaphor in the phrase, and would the phrase itself have been employed but for the identification of the Church with Israel? The designation is not merely metaphorical, since the Christian has a sacrifice to offer. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, after the well-known passage in which he expounds the significance of the fact that Jesus suffered without the gate and His blood was brought into the holy place, speaks of one form of Christian sacrifice in the following words: "Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name." Another form of sacrifice which Christians are able to offer is inculcated in the next verse. "But to do good and communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased." In other words, the service of our fellows, the giving of our substance to the needy, is a kind of sacrifice such as God desires to receive from us. Praise and philanthropy, these are the sacrifices which the Christian is competent to offer. But their sacrificial quality is made possible by the sacrifice of Christ offered once for all. For, apart from this, man has no real access to God, and it is only because Christ through His offering of Himself has dedicated a new and living way that

our praise and acts of beneficence can be presented and graciously accepted at the throne of grace. Similarly, James defines true religious worship (though not exhaustively) as "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Peter describes the function of the holy priesthood as "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." The spiritual sacrifice stands in tacit contrast to the material and sensuous sacrifices of the older religions. And once again we see how their possibility is created by the mediation of Christ. So Paul bids his readers present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. This is such a service as befits their rational nature, an offering of far worthier character than that of dumb, unreasoning animals incapable of discerning in the violence of which they were the victims anything beyond the physical fact, blind to the religious and moral purposes of which they were in death the unconscious media. When he thanks the Philippians for the gifts which expressed their love, he describes these gifts as "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." His own ceaseless activity in spreading the Gospel he describes in priestly language. He speaks of himself as a priest of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, who ministers in sacrifice the Gospel of God. The offering which he presents is his Gentile converts, and they are made acceptable to God through their sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Thus the characteristic sacrifice of the Christian is spiritual and moral, the offering of himself, his labours, his substance, his devotion.

And this note, so clearly sounded in the New Testament, is heard again and again in the Church of the early centuries. The widows are described by Polycarp and Tertullian as the altar of God ; and a similar usage is to be found in the Apostolic Constitutions. Polycarp himself, when bound to the stake, is depicted as " like a noble ram out of a great flock for an offering, a burnt sacrifice made ready and acceptable to God." Prayers and thanksgiving are described as the sacrifices well-pleasing to God. And naturally the Eucharist as the climax of Christian worship, received the title which was not withheld from the prayers and praises offered by the assembly.

The Christian Church then is rightly called a priesthood and its members priests, since they have real sacrifices to offer. But clearly the sacrifices which have been enumerated differ radically from the sacrifice of Christ, dedicated in Gethsemane, slain on Calvary, presented in Heaven. And the question arises whether the priesthood constituted by His Church has any share in that sacrifice. One preliminary observation should be made. It must never be forgotten that Hebrew sacrifices were of different types. This, of course, is perfectly well known ; but in common usage, when a sacrifice is spoken of, a propitiatory sacrifice tends to be thought of to the exclusion of other types. This tendency has probably had an unfortunate influence on the interpretation and application of sacrificial terminology. Thus, if we take the crucial case of the Eucharist, there need be no dispute that it is rightly called a sacrifice. But the tendency to use the term in the more limited sense has made it

easy to attach to it the associations of the sin offering, and on the other hand to reduce the sacrificial language, in which prayer, praise, and philanthropy are described, to little more than a metaphor. We can thus understand why those who regard the Eucharist as a sacrifice, in precisely the same sense as the thanksgiving, the petitions, the gifts of the community, should wish to discontinue the use of the term, recognising no sacrifice in the Christian religion but the sacrifice of Christ.

III

The discussion of the Sacraments is the subject of a special essay in this volume, so that no detailed treatment need here be given. Some points, however, it is necessary to notice.

I assume, in spite of the absence from Mark and Matthew of any injunction to repeat the rite, that our Lord did, as Paul and perhaps Luke report, institute on the night in which He was betrayed the solemn eating of bread and drinking of wine, to be observed after His death by His followers. Whether the meal at which the rite was instituted was actually the Passover or not, some connection with the Passover can hardly be denied. In the narrower technical sense the Passover might be regarded as not properly a sacrifice, for it was instituted before Israel's departure from Egypt and the creation of the priestly and sacrificial system. It was connected with the home, not with the sanctuary ; it was observed by the people without the intervention of the priests. It was a family feast commemorative of deliverance ; the blood was manipu-

lated by the laity, with a prophylactic rather than a propitiatory intention. Yet in a wider sense it may be spoken of as a sacrifice, and this term is actually used in Exodus xii, 27, and by Paul (1 Cor. v, 7). Jesus also regarded the Last Supper as connected with the inauguration of the New Covenant of which Jeremiah had spoken. The Old Covenant was instituted by the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on the altar, where God was thought to be manifested, and on the people, the two parties being thus united by a blood-covenant. The sacrifices on this occasion were burnt offerings and peace offerings, the former completely surrendered to God, the latter used for a communal feast. Sacrificial associations may then be connected with the institution of the New Covenant. Yet it would be unwarrantable to infer that the Eucharist as celebrated in the Upper Room was itself the institution of the Covenant. Paul identifies the Christian Passover with Christ, and its sacrifice must be His death. And similarly the New Covenant was inaugurated by the shedding of His blood on Calvary, not by what took place in the Upper Room. The Eucharist has a relation to Christ's death. It is its dramatic representation, and, as celebrated by the Church, a rite commemorative of our deliverance from bondage. There is no explicit indication in the words of Jesus of any sacrificial character. It is true that the verb rendered "do" bore in the Septuagint a sacrificial meaning corresponding with the equivalent Hebrew term; and the word rendered "remembrance" might be employed of sacrificial memorial. Yet neither meaning is necessary here, or indeed probable, and in

the early Church the words were normally interpreted, "Do this in remembrance of me."[1] That the body and blood of Jesus were actually offered in sacrifice is not in dispute. But that the Eucharistic bread and wine were a sacrificial offering in the same sense there is no warrant for believing. Save in the interests of a theory, no one would regard as a tolerable interpretation of our Lord's words that the bread broken and the wine poured out in the Upper Room were identical with that still unbroken body and that still unshed blood, which in the fulness of His humanity were still present in their midst.

Paul regards the Eucharistic cup as a communion of Christ's blood and the broken bread as a communion of His body. Here again the context suggests a sacrificial meaning, but, once more, sacrificial in the sense of the peace-offering rather than the sin-offering. The Lord's Supper is a communion feast, in which we experience our fellowship and union with our living and exalted Head and with the other members of His body. Similarly, if the discourse in John vi has direct reference to the Eucharist, which is very doubtful, the rite is regarded as conveying Christ as the Divine nutriment of the soul. But the passage itself contains a warning against "fleshly" interpretation.

The sacrificial theory of the Eucharist is supposed to find strong support in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This writing is pre-eminently the Epistle of Priesthood, but of course of the Priesthood of Christ. The words "We have an altar" are thought definitely to imply a reference, at least secondary, to the Lord's Supper.

[1] See Gore, *The Body of Christ*, pp. 312–316.

The passage in which the words occur is one of extreme difficulty, and an interpretation can be offered only with diffidence. I have discussed it at length elsewhere,[1] and must here simply repeat my conviction that the whole point of the author's argument is directly against any reference to the Eucharist, either primary or secondary. The Christian sacrifice belongs to that type of sin-offerings with which no sacrificial meal can be associated. The blood was brought into the holy place, the flesh taken without the camp and burnt, in order that the body of the victim, which was holy in a dangerous degree, might be safely disposed of. So the body of Christ was disposed of outside the camp, the blood presented at the heavenly altar. The very nature of the fact forbade its connection with a meal: "altar" and "Lord's table" are mutually exclusive terms. Moreover, the author emphatically insists that the sacrifice of Christ is a finished work, not needing, as the Jewish offerings, to be constantly repeated, nor intrinsically ineffective as they were. He has offered one sacrifice which has abiding effects, one offering which has perfected for ever those whom it sanctified. The sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist is in the early Church specially connected with the offering of the fruits of the earth, which were brought by the worshippers as their gifts and were used for the sacred feast. The offering in kind was subsequently given in money, and this is represented in modern times by the offertory. There is no quite early evidence for connecting the Eucharist as a sacrifice with the sacrifice of Christ. But it is

[1] "Hebrews" in *The Century Bible*, pp. 238–242.

obvious that the transition was very easy from the conception of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, because it was the offering of the fruits of the earth which were used for the Agapè and also for charitable distribution, to the conception of it as a sacrifice in the narrower sense and the connection of this narrower sense with the sacrifice on the cross in virtue of the identification of the elements with Christ's body and blood. But this development, however natural, especially in a Church drawn mainly from heathenism, *was* a development. It was neither Biblical nor primitive. It must, of course, be clearly kept in mind that a high doctrine of the Eucharist need not necessarily be associated with the sacrificial interpretation. The worshipper's presentation of the elements is one thing, supernatural action on the elements themselves is another. No doubt the two tend to be associated. But, as we see from the history of the doctrine in the Middle Ages, the problem of the Eucharistic sacrifice received far less attention than the problem as to the change in the elements, to which the theory of transubstantiation, in spite of its portentous difficulties, came to be the generally accepted and ultimately dogmatically decreed solution in the Roman Church.

The Christian priesthood, then, has its sacrifices. These sacrifices are the offering of our whole being to God and all that we have; our helpful ministry to those in need; our worship in praise and prayer; and as a climax of this worship the Lord's Supper, which is a communion feast vividly recalling to memory and imagination the sacrificial death of Christ, and thus

touching within us the deepest springs of gratitude and devotion. It is also a communal feast in which those who partake together realise their union with each other, but also with the whole Catholic Church, not simply the Church now militant on earth and the Church triumphant within the veil, but also the vast assembly of those as yet unborn who as the ages pass will take their place in the army of God. The Eucharist is thus for us an anticipation of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. But even higher and more precious is the gift of communion with our exalted Lord ; it is the most vivid expression of that mystical union with Him which is the inmost secret of the Christian life, the deepest source of our vital energy.

IV

These high prerogatives are the possession of Christ's universal Church, the whole body of believers. But from very early times the Church has possessed, at first in a more fluid, later in forms more rigidly fixed, a ministry distinct from the great body of laymen. And to that ministry a distinctively priestly character has been assigned from the third century onwards by a very large part of Christendom. The general priesthood of the Church, the priesthood of all Christians, is not denied ; but for the ministry priestly functions are claimed to which the laity have no right. It is to be observed that this is a question quite independent of any particular organisation. As a matter of fact, sacerdotalism has been almost entirely connected with Churches of the Episcopal order. But

those who accept the Presbyterian organisation might, and in some instances do, assert a sacerdotal character for their ministry. Nor is there anything in the nature of the case to prevent such a character being claimed for a Congregationalist ministry. All these different types of Churches are assured that they possess a valid ministry, and there is nothing in the organisation itself to negative its priestly character. Still, as a matter of history, it is in Churches with an Episcopal ministry that sacerdotal ideas have almost exclusively flourished. They have also been normally connected with the idea of succession from the Apostles, though it would not be at all inconceivable for the sacerdotal status to be claimed quite apart from any belief that it had been transmitted by this channel.

Leaving theoretical possibilities aside, the sacerdotal theory is held in a thoroughgoing or in a more moderate form, both, it should be repeated, recognising the universal priesthood of Christians. The priesthood of the ministry may be regarded as independent of the universal priesthood or as a specialised organ of it. It may have vicarious functions, or functions merely representative, but in either case it is indispensable. In both cases it is held that the specific priesthood of the ministry was instituted by Christ in the appointment of the apostles and has been transmitted by succession from them to every minister in His true Church. This succession, it is almost universally believed, has passed through the episcopate as its channel, a bishop alone having the power to transmit the grace of Orders. It is not within the competence of the Church, if the presence of a bishop cannot be

obtained, to create a ministry out of its own resources. The priesthood can be given only "from above," it cannot arise from below. Hence, the continued existence of the Church on earth depending on a rightly ordained priesthood, the continuance of the episcopate is essential. The Head of the Church is thus pledged by the very terms of the institution to maintain through all time the episcopal succession inviolate. Baptism may, it is true, be administered by the laity; but only the priest can offer sacrifice on the altar, pronounce the absolution of the penitent, or provide for the perpetuation of the ministry.

The question at issue is not, of course, whether our Lord intended that His Church should possess a ministry, or whether, even apart from our knowledge of His intention, the creation of a ministry would be legitimate and desirable. Most of those communions which reject the sacerdotal theory of the ministry in any form, possess a ministry, and value it highly. They are in no way indifferent to its incalculable value for order, for administration, for edification, for worship. They recognise that specialisation of function makes for the cohesion and efficiency of the whole body of Christ. But the sacerdotal theory seems to them not only insecurely based in Scripture and history, but less true to the genius of Christianity.

If the slightness of reference in the New Testament to the universal priesthood is striking, it is much more striking that the minister as contrasted with the layman is never in the New Testament styled a priest at all. The designation of Israel as a priestly nation and of individual Israelites as priests is ex-

tremely rare in the Old Testament. But nothing is more familiar than the contrast of priests and laity. Nor was anything more fundamental in the Jewish religious system as Jesus and the Apostles knew it. Moreover, it met them in all the forms of non-Biblical religion with which they came in contact. It is therefore very significant that the term should be so completely absent from the words they uttered and the literature they wrote.

This remarkable and unanimous silence calls for explanation. The most natural and obvious is that the name was avoided because the existence of the thing itself was not recognised. This is in all probability the true explanation; but naturally those who accept a sacerdotal theory of the ministry explain the fact in another way. It is urged that it is just the surest and most settled things which receive least prominence in the New Testament, that the matters on which most stress was laid were those on which controversy turned or where ambiguity needed to be cleared away. What was understood by all and never came into question could be taken for granted and receive no explicit mention. This has even been expressed in the rather perilous paradox that "in reading the Bible, we must remember that the most important things were often what it left out." There is, of course, an element of truth in such a contention, though so unbalanced an expression of it is indefensible. The New Testament was written for Christians, and therefore it had for its context the general beliefs and practices of the Christian societies. Hence if it was on all hands understood that the Christian ministry

possessed a sacerdotal character which was not shared by the laity, we should have no reason to be surprised at the absence of any explicit exposition of this fact.

Nevertheless, this hypothesis to account for a difficulty is extremely unsatisfactory. The recognition of such a distinction within the society is the very fact which needs to be proved. Apart from a backward inference, based on its later prevalence, we have no direct evidence for it. This is not the case with the fundamental Christian doctrines, for which the New Testament evidence is explicit and often copious. It would in any case be barely credible that the specific priestly function of the ministry, if universally recognised, should never receive incidental, and therefore all the more significant, expression. Granted that the absence of systematic exposition need occasion no surprise in the case of a universally received doctrine, yet it is highly improbable that it should never be the subject of mention or even allusion. And indeed it is too generous a concession to say that detailed exposition was unnecessary. For while the New Testament was almost wholly, if perhaps not exclusively, addressed to Christian readers, it was to readers who had come into the Church from Judaism or Paganism. And in both types of religion the priest had been a prominent and indispensable element. It was accordingly a point to which explicit reference might reasonably have been expected, in order to safeguard the converts from Judaism or Paganism against misconceptions of the priesthood of the ministry derived from their former religious associations. And, in particular, it

is difficult to believe that so much teaching as we find in the Pastoral Epistles, to say nothing of other parts of the New Testament, could have been given on the subject of the ministry without definite exposition of its priestly character and function, had such existed. Moreover, whatever theory of Scripture we hold, it is difficult to believe that the Holy Spirit would have left the Church without explicit recognition in its classical documents of a truth so vital, so fundamental. For claims so tremendous and, if true, so necessary to be known, He would surely have provided us with an indisputable guarantee. Such a guarantee is not afforded by tradition or by the emergence of the conception at a relatively late point in the history of the Church. For we need to be protected against the capricious action of tradition, its rapid declension in purity, its exposure to all sorts of foreign and illegitimate influence. Left to itself, as the generations come and go, as it passes from the land of its nativity and is accepted by people trained in alien civilisations, the tradition may be remoulded over and over again, and be stamped with a new image and superscription. Against such deterioration written documents are the only guarantee, and even they have not always proved effective. In saying this I do not affirm that the New Testament supplies us with a model which must be faithfully copied. On the contrary, the Church is left free to develop its own organisation, adjusting it to changing conditions. But what is at stake in the question of ministerial priesthood is not the form which the Church may assume, but the very existence of the Church itself. And it is difficult to believe, on any

Christian theory of Scripture, that on a matter so vital the Divine oracles should be either silent or ambiguous. Along similar lines of argument a case not so much weaker could be made out for the Roman supremacy, and with perhaps even more New Testament warrant.

It is accordingly very difficult to give any explanation of this silence in the New Testament other than the fact that the writers did not recognise that the ministry possessed any distinctively priestly status. And if it be urged that here the religion of the New Covenant naturally continued the order of the Old Covenant, wherein the Aaronic priesthood co-existed with the priesthood of the nation, it may be replied that the Epistle to the Hebrews leaves no room for any priesthood, in the strict sense of the term, by the side of the High-priesthood of Christ, nor any sacrifice beside His sacrifice. Even the priesthood of all Christians must be defined with the fullest allowance for this principle.

Thus some generations elapsed before Christian writers described Christian ministers as priests. Tertullian is the first to do this, so far as we know. But he insists also that the laity are priests and must equally with the clergy live in harmony with their priestly vocation. They may, if need arise, perform specifically ministerial duties. It is Cyprian who develops the theory on the lines of the Old Testament model. Uncontrolled by the most elementary principles of sound exegesis, he applies the language of the Old Testament about the priesthood, the Levites, and the laity, directly to the ministry and laity of the Christian Church. His presentation of the case was so thoroughgoing that he

left little for his successors to do. For him the Christian ministry is a priesthood in the fullest and strictest sense of the term. There is no difficulty in accounting for the intrusion of the doctrine as a foreign element into the Church ; for the conception was quite naturally introduced from Paganism, and its rapid assimilation promoted by false analogy from the Old Testament. Cyprian, who was a distinguished pagan lawyer, as Tertullian had been before him, was baptized in A.D. 246, and two years later became bishop and died a martyr after an episcopate of ten years. Such a record does not inspire much confidence in his capacity to construct a doctrine of the ministry free from unconscious heathen influence.

As to the place in the argument of the idea of Apostolic Succession, it must be remembered that identity of term does not involve identity of meaning in this instance, any more than in the three orders of the ministry. There is a very noteworthy passage at the close of Dr. C. H. Turner's learned essay on Apostolic Succession.[1] He says : " There is not, within the patristic period and even considerably later, any deviation from the common and traditional conception of the meaning of Apostolic Succession, as we have seen it in vigour from the time of Hegesippus and Irenaeus onwards. The conception that in post-Reformation times has superseded it in the Western Church may possibly be justified as a logical result of asserting the validity of non-catholic orders, but it was at least a novel departure and must be frankly

[1] *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, edited by Dr. Swete, p. 196.

recognised as such. Whether it was wholly a good departure may be doubted: certainly the more modern view is often so phrased that it seems to lend colour to a mechanical conception of the Sacraments, a danger from which the patristic view is wholly free."

V

But the genius of our religion also seems unfavourable to the recognition of a sacerdotal caste. Even the priesthood of Christians receives but little explicit recognition in the New Testament. A priesthood peculiar to the ministry receives no recognition at all. The sacrifice of the great High Priest effects so completely all that a mediatorial priesthood between God and man is intended to effect, that no place seems to be left for any sacrificing priesthood designed to deal with human sin or to secure reconciliation between man and God. If ministerial priesthood involves mediation between the worshipper and God, it is foreign to the genius of the religion. But those who repudiate a vicarious and acknowledge only a representative priesthood insist that the priesthood of the ministry is the exercise of a function which belongs to the whole body. The position may be stated in the words of one of its ablest advocates. Dr. Moberly says[1]: "The Christian ministry is not a substituted intermediary—still less an atoning mediator—between God and lay people; but it is rather the representative and organ

[1] *Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 242. Reference may also be made to ch. iii and pp. 243f, 246, 254–262, 297f, and to Gore, *The Church and the Ministry*, 3rd ed., pp. 84–94.

of the whole body, in the exercise of prerogatives and powers which belong to the body as a whole. It is ministerially empowered to wield, as the body's organic representative, the powers which belong *to the body* but which the body cannot wield except through its own organs duly fitted for the purpose. What is duly done by Christian ministers, it is not so much that *they* do it, in the stead, or for the sake, of the whole: but rather that the whole does it by and through them. The Christian priest does not offer an atoning sacrifice on behalf of the Church : it is rather the Church through his act that, not so much 'offers an atonement,' as 'is identified upon earth with the one heavenly offering of the atonement of Christ.'"

This passage has much more of the Christian note than statements which insist on a priesthood of the ministry generically different from that of the whole Church. And the repudiation of the position that there is a sacerdotal caste within the Church, standing in a closer spiritual relation to God than other Christians, is altogether welcome. Yet it is questionable whether it is so self-consistent. For it also emphatically denies that the Church has the power to create its ministry. This depends for its very being on the apostolate and the ministry which has been derived by unbroken transmission from it. If, however, the priesthood of ministry is essentially none other than the priesthood of the Church, and if it is rightly described as representative, the natural inference would seem to be that the Church has the right to delegate the exercise of its priestly functions, and if need be to resume them. But this conclusion is

strenuously denied; it would cut the nerve of the whole theory. For the theory is that the priest's commission is not derived from the Church at all, but comes over the head of the Church from Christ, through the Apostles and the Episcopal order. A priesthood from below, as it is unfortunately styled, is repudiated. It is difficult to reconcile this with the disclaimer of a special caste; but it is objectionable as involving a false antithesis and too mean a conception of the Church. For derivation from Christ through apostolate and episcopate ought not to be contrasted with derivation from the Church. It is ours to take with the fullest seriousness the thought of the Church as the Body of Christ; it is His organ of self-expression, in which He lives and through which He acts. If we accept without any misgiving the promise of His perpetual presence with us, we shall be prepared to recognise that the action of the Church may be as much His action as the action which the theory postulates, whereby He created a special order in the Church through which alone a valid ministry could be secured. If we have a truly "high" doctrine of the Church, we shall feel instinctively that there is something wrong in the idea that the creation of the ministry by the Church implies evolution from below. On either theory the commission is derived from Christ Himself, working according to one view in this way, according to the other in that. All views of the ministry are wrong which imply any independence of the Church or elevation above it. It is specialised for the better performance of functions which belong to the Church, and which the Body of Christ may, as the organ of

His will, provide for along other lines. The Christian religion is distinguished for its elasticity, its faculty of adjustment to changing conditions; it is not a spirit without a body, but it can retain its identity through multitudinous changes of form. Indeed at the very point where continuity of rigid form has been postulated as essential, historical research discloses a remarkable fluidity. The ministry possesses no priesthood which does not belong to the laity, and there is no function of the ministry which it is illegitimate for the layman to perform, provided he does it at the call of the society. It may, of course, be most undesirable as a matter of order that duties restricted by custom to the ministry should be undertaken by laymen; but, on the theory of priesthood here advocated, there is no insuperable theoretical difficulty in their doing so.[1] And however anxious the exponents of the representative priesthood may be to affirm the universal priesthood and base upon it the position claimed for the ministry, the practical result of reserving the

[1] So Tertullian: "Thus where there is no bench of clergy, you present the Eucharistic offerings and baptize and are your own sole priest. For where three are gathered together, there is a church, even though they be laymen. Therefore if you exercise the rights of a priest in cases of necessity, it is your duty also to observe the discipline enjoined on a priest, where of necessity you exercise the rights of a priest." Luther says: "And to put the matter yet more clearly, if a little band of pious laymen were seized and set down in a desert, without having with them a consecrated priest, and were agreed on one thing, and chose one from among them, and charged him with the office of baptizing, of saying Mass, of absolving and preaching, he would be as truly a priest as if all the bishops and Popes had consecrated him." Lightfoot says: "It must be borne in mind that the minister's function is *representative* without being

most characteristic functions as a clerical monopoly is to empty the priesthood of believers of its practical significance. A vicarious priesthood may be emphatically disowned in word and the ministerial be regarded as but the organ of the universal priesthood. Yet the result will be that the layman will feel that the minister is a priest in a sense in which he himself is not ; and the significance of the universal priesthood will be nullified because the sacerdotal essence of the Church has been localised and concentrated in a special Order of it. I desire to recognise with thankfulness the attempt to present the priesthood of the ministry in a form which seeks to conserve the prerogatives of the Church ; but I cannot disguise the conviction that it is an attempt to combine incompatibles, the futility of which the future will reveal, as the logic inherent in the situation works itself out.

It is a sad reflection that the divisions of Christendom have largely had their root in controversy on those institutions which should have been the safeguard of unity. The ministry was peculiarly pledged to

vicarial. He is a priest, as the mouthpiece, the delegate, of a priestly race. His acts are not his own, but the acts of the congregation. Hence too it will follow that, viewed on this side as on the other, his function cannot be absolute and indispensable. It may be a general rule, it may be under ordinary circumstances a practically universal law, that the highest act of congregational worship shall be performed through the principal officers of the congregation. But an emergency may arise when the spirit and not the letter must decide. The Christian ideal will then interpose and interpret our duty. The higher ordinance of the universal priesthood will overrule all special limitations. The layman will assume functions which are otherwise restricted to the ordained minister." (*Philippians* p. 268).

be a rallying point around which the members of the Church might gather. But, too easily forgetful of the Apostolic precedent, the ministry tended to lord it over God's heritage, to mistake the means for the end, to turn the privilege of service into rights of mastery, to arrogate as its own monopoly what belonged to the whole people of God. And this provoked reaction with its peril of excess. So too the Eucharist, the rite wherein the corporate unity of the Body receives its most vivid, its most intense, expression, has been the occasion of the most embittered strife, the sharpest and deepest cleavage. It is ours to cleanse our minds from prejudice, our eyes from obliquity of vision, our heart from bitterness, from resentment and from scorn. Dispassionate historical investigation may do much to remove obstacles, to search our traditions to the root and teach us whether they are truly expressions of essentials, or but prejudices masquerading as principles. A deeper understanding of the genius of our own religion will help us to discern clearly between accident and essence, to see what things may be surrendered without treason to our trust, what must at all costs be preserved. And the more deeply we experience the redeeming grace of God, our fellowship with our living and exalted Lord, our inward unity in the one Spirit, the more we shall feel that icy barriers melt, and our own hearts glow with a love in which we shall fuse and blend. Assuredly we cannot acquiesce in disunion as the permanent lot of God's people on earth, or drug our conscience with the reflection that divisions blend in a higher unity within the veil. Reunion, we cannot disguise it from ourselves, is no light enterprise, and enthusiasm

must be tempered with circumspection, and faith must walk hand-in-hand with patience. But if we are convinced that it is God's will, it is our present duty to "make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

CORPORATE AUTHORITY

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SYNOPSIS

The subject defined. Present Anglican attitude as to "Validity": the written basis of Anglicanism appeals, as regards the Ministry, to primitive usage; so does Nonconformity. The chief issues:

I. In the New Testament the Church itself is the primary corporate authority; the Ministry is representative of this, a "ministerial priesthood."

Ministry of two types, teaching and administrative; the latter has two species, succour and leadership. Such Ministry, originally voluntary and informal, gradually became elective and regularised, and so more expressive of corporate authority; but the earlier stage most characteristic of primitive Church life.

Certain ministries of the Word, those most "inspired," remained unordained—so long as they kept their distinct character; the ordained types rested less manifestly on Spirit-gifts (*charisms*), being of the ordinary executive kind, and were invested with representative authority for the purpose.

The Church's authority expressed in the acts of (1) election, (2) setting apart or ordination: the essence of (2) was corporate commission by the Church; yet in it, latent gift might first become manifest (*e.g.* the case of Timothy); such cases described in terms of religious experience, not ultimate theory.

Sub-Apostolic evidence continuous with that of the New Testament.

II. A single presiding Bishop or Pastor first emerges in the sub-Apostolic age, as focus of corporate Church authority, as well as of Unity; but the relation between Church and Ministry remains as before.

Evidence of the Ignatian Epistles (c. 110-117): organisation and authority congregational, not diocesan, in type; unity on a purely spiritual basis.

Bearing of this on inter-congregational organisation, when it arose: Dr. Hort on the earlier local autonomy, and on "Apostolic" authority as related to the Episcopate: "Apostolic Succession" not a primitive idea.

Congregationalism, then, the first word in organisation and corporate authority, but not therefore the last: further development in organised unity expedient: yet the line taken was not the only one possible, nor the truest to type. A voluntary and moral, rather than coercive and legal, bond of unity alone proper to Christian fellowship; for a time it persisted even under "Catholicism," and must be restored. Collective Church authority in relation to ordination emerges rather late, and that tentatively, ere hardening into canon law: concurrent change in the Episcopate and in the other "clergy" dependent on it.

The form of ordaining a bishop changed: once presbyters, as his colleagues, shared in the act.

Bearing of this on Reunion, on the basis of a "constitutional" episcopate.

III. Modern Anglican Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism, all owe something to recoil from the medieval type of "the historic episcopate" as prelacy—with its correlative, the pupilage of "the laity": in them, however, reformation went to different lengths. These three systems are typical of all existing Protestant species of Church life.

IV. The future. Hopeful outlook of the "Second Interim Report," which recognises the positive witness of each type: a higher harmony of all sought, for the common good: its basis a common loyalty to the Church of the New Testament, informed by the experiences of Church history: its moral for corporate authority, both local and general. In a reunited Church the Episcopate, as regular organ of corporate unity, should play a leading part in its *two* historic forms; its election and ordination should express the organic relation between the Church and itself.

"Re-ordination" should, on both sides, be only the symbol of fresh Church jurisdiction. The theory of the "grace" in ordination must be left open, as a non-essential—as now in Anglicanism.

Conclusions.

CORPORATE AUTHORITY

The subject of this essay is corporate authority in Christ's Church and in its ordained ministry. Much connected with Reunion turns upon clear ideas as to this. A common Anglican criticism of other Protestant communions and their ministries is that they lack the note of corporate authority. This is, of course, obviously incorrect as regards Presbyterianism. But what High Anglicans at least have mainly in mind applies even to it, namely, lack of "the historic episcopate" viewed as the symbol and embodiment of the corporate unity and authority of the Church Catholic, one organism throughout the world. For want of this link, assumed indispensable, ministries and the communions to which they minister are held to lack "valid" or assured ecclesiastical authority, which exists only in the one Catholic Church.

It would afford but little direct help to the object of the present essay, as a contribution towards reunion, to dwell on the inconsistency of the High Anglican use of "the historic episcopate" to rule Nonconformists outside the Church Catholic, seeing that Anglicans themselves are in schism from the great majority of those claiming "Catholic principles"

as their prime authority. Yet indirectly this negative fact has a vital bearing on the problem of reunion. It means that this cannot be solved at all, on sound and self-consistent principles, save by approaching it at a point historically, if not logically, prior to the definite emergence of "Catholicism."

Anglicanism itself, by its formularies, appeals in the last resort, like Nonconforming communions, to the period of Primitive Christianity, when the personal influence of the Church's founders still actually moulded its practices and traditions, and particularly to the New Testament writings. And it is of vital moment that Evangelical Anglicans, and in fact all English Churchmen who really accept the spirit and standpoint of those Articles of Religion which define the position of their national Church as one among the Churches of the Reformation, should definitely break with all modes of thought and feeling touching Nonconformist communions due to traditional "Catholic" language and principles. The foundations of reunion between Episcopalians and others must be well and truly laid upon the bed-rock of Scriptural principles, and upon the practice of the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Church, before either side proceeds to consider the value and relative authority of any distinctively Catholic developments. One such development is that very office which has been the fruitful cause of division in English ecclesiastical life, and still is a main ground of division, viz., the diocesan and hierarchic, as distinct from the congregational and constitutional, type of the episcopate. Manifestly it does not exist in the New Testament or the

writings of the Apostolic Fathers. *Its* value, then, must on Reformation principles be relative and secondary, not primary and determinative. That it has a value Nonconformists freely acknowledge ; and many of them are ready for reunion on the basis of a reformed episcopate, constitutional and representative in spirit and methods. But everything depends, to begin with, upon our loyalty all round to the teachings of the New Testament and the really primitive Church upon our subject.

Accordingly we have to inquire, first of all, What were the original Christian principles of corporate authority in the Church, in their application to Church organisation ? Next, how and why did they undergo change or development during the early centuries ? Further, how did they fare at the Reformation, when deliberate efforts were made to restore them to due honour ; and how do Anglican Episcopacy and other British ecclesiastical types resulting from those efforts respectively stand related to them to-day ? When we have cleared our thoughts on such points, we can the better decide how far the common Anglican feeling as to non-episcopal communions is well-grounded or otherwise, and whether the Anglican system itself lacks any original elements of corporate authority.

I

According to the New Testament and other primitive writings, presumably exhibiting in clearest relief the essential genius of Christianity, what is the body to which corporate authority belongs ? Primarily in

principle to the Church itself, though the ordinary exercise of its authority is entrusted, for certain purposes and within certain limits, to the ministry, conceived as its special organ of regular and orderly corporate action. That is, the ministry acts representatively for the Church in certain of its functions, so far as these are furthered by formal organisation. This and its underlying basis, the common inspiration of all members of Christ's *Ecclesia* by the indwelling Spirit of Messiah—in that "he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit"—is brought out with special force, and applied with great consistency to Church "organisation," by Dr. Hort in his lectures on *The Christian Ecclesia.*

One outcome of this consciousness of Messiah's Church as possessed in every part by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts of Grace (*charisms*), was the "Universal Priesthood" of the Christian people, dealt with elsewhere in this volume. With the high prerogatives of this aspect of the Christian calling, as implying full powers of access to God in worship, goes also governmental authority, in that Christ hath made His people "unto God a kingdom and priests, and they shall reign upon the earth."[1] That this capacity for rule included self-government, through the wisdom proper to Spirit-indwelt men, is manifest from what St. Paul says to the Corinthian Church about the sentence of temporary excommunication passed "by the majority" (2 Cor. ii, 6; cf. 1 Cor. vi, 1ff) in a special instance; but still more from the way in which the New Testament addresses

[1] Rev. v, 10; cf. i, 6, 1 Peter ii, 9.

"the saints" in their local corporate being, churches in particular, as competent and responsible for all Church decisions. There is no trace of any independent priesthood or clerical authority, as in ancient religion generally, in the case of such special ministry as existed in the midst ot the Christian people.[1]

The ministry is really a representative one; its corporate authority was devolved on it by "the saints," and in various matters, such as Church discipline, was exercised in actual co-operation with the Church assembly itself, as the ultimate seat of such authority. All authority indeed was of God, as "in the Spirit," whether among Christians at large or in the ministry, which rested on special personal gifts of Grace. No picture of Church life and authority in the Apostolic age which does not keep this principle in view, and allow fully for the fact that it was an age when the Spirit was felt to be the dominant factor in all Church relations, can be true to facts or other than out of focus.

How faint was the distinction originally existing between the general ministry of Christians as such, and the official ministry of special gifts by those who came to be "set apart" with prayer and laying on of hands (according to Jewish usage)—"ordained," as we say, after due election by fellow Church-members—

[1] Lightfoot points out that *ideally* the relation between Israel and its special priestly tribe was the same in principle, as shown by the account of the setting apart of the Levites to their representative ministry (Num. viii, 10). See his classic essay on "The Christian Ministry" in his commentary on Philippians (pp. 182ff), the principles of which are those followed here, as elsewhere, save as indicated.

appears from passages like the following.[1] "*According as each hath received a grace-gift, ministering it among yourselves*, as good stewards of the variegated grace of God: if any speaketh—as it were oracles of God; if any ministereth—as of the strength which God supplieth; that in all God may be glorified through Jesus Christ." Here we have the genius and organic principle of Christian ministry. It is the outflow of the corporate life and power of the Church, as a fellowship or brotherhood sharing all its God-given gifts in the mutual service of love.

Broadly speaking, ministry was of two types: ministry of the "Word" or revealed mind of God—his "oracles"—and ministry of practical service; in a word, teaching and administration. Yet the latter, too, though less obviously inspired, and assuming common forms of helpfulness, was also traced to the Spirit's impulse and qualifying activity. This is evident from the inclusion of "succour" in the list of God-given ministries, after those specially concerned with "the Word"—ministered by Apostles, Prophets, Teachers—and just before "governance" (lit. "steering," *kubernesis*). It is surely significant of the genius of Christianity that St. Paul mentions these two varieties of Christian ministry in the order "succours, governances," rather than *vice versa*—as would later on certainly have been the case. This same principle underlies even the process by which authority in practical leadership came to certain members in the local church who, "as stewards of God's grace" (1 Peter iv, 10), "set themselves to

[1] 1 Pet. iv, 10f; cf. Rom. xii, 5–8.

minister to the Saints." For the Church in Corinth is exhorted[1] to "recognise" such in a practical way, to subordinate themselves to them "and to every one that worketh with them and laboureth."

Here we see how voluntary ministry could pass gradually, through virtual recognition by the community, into the stage of election and appointment, which added formal corporate sanction and authority. This last stage is clearly visible in the Pastoral Epistles, and probably is implied also in the salutation of "bishops and deacons," along with the church itself, in the Epistle to the Philippians. But it is the earlier and more informal stage which casts so much light on the original idea of the specialised ministry, as resting upon and growing out of the general ministry of mutual edification, together with the collective responsibility of "the brethren," as a church, for the care of all its members. This is what is probably still reflected in Paul's letters to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. v, 14, 2 Thess. iii, 6, 15).

These, then, are the radical principles of Church organisation and authority:—the endowment of the community throughout with Divine graces and powers, in and through the Spirit of God, given to all alike in principle, but dividing to each severally as He will: the duty of all to exercise their gifts to the common profit, subject only to the Divine laws of love and order: and the corporate responsibility of the community to use its Spirit-given power of discernment in recognising and sanctioning the ministries of specially

[1] 1 Cor. xvi, 15–18, and compare 1 Thess. v, 12.

gifted members for the common good. Such corporate sanction confers on these persons a churchly or "ecclesiastical" authority, within limits fixed by common usage, added to that inherently attaching to the Divine gift qualifying them for their ministry. Where the ministry is manifestly of the Spirit-endowed (*charismatic*) order, and so self-authenticating, as in the case of Apostles, Prophets, and the more inspired type of Teachers associated with them,[1] it carries its own credentials and needs no formal act of recognition, still less appointment, by the community, in order to claim the loyal obedience of the brethren. But where the qualifying gift is less obviously invested with Divine authority, as in the case of "bishops and deacons," its exercise receives the countersign of the community in a formal manner; and thereby acquires ecclesiastical authority by an act of the *Ecclesia* itself.[2]

The act of solemn empowering by the Church to minister in its name is twofold: election, after testimony given to pre-existing fitness, and solemn setting apart to the exercise of the functions of the office in question. This latter act consisted of prayer with laying on of hands (a Jewish symbol of spiritual solidarity between those praying and those prayed over); and has remained the characteristic form of ordination—to use later language. What it was conceived to add to the prior act of election, after proof

[1] 1 Cor. xii, 28; Acts xiii, 1; *Didache*, xiii, 2, xv, 1, 2.

[2] The above distinctions are quite in keeping with the element of truth in Dean Robinson's criticism of certain views touching the "charismatic" ministry, in his essay in *The Early History of the Church and the Ministry*.

of the candidate's spiritual qualifications (*dokimasia*), was just corporate authority or commission, already implied in election, but made explicit and complete by the commending of him to God, as the Church's representative, for His continued blessing.

The essence of ordination, then, was not any conferment of fresh graces or intrinsic powers in the divine and invisible sphere—though enhancement of existing gifts was prayed for and expected—but rather dedication and authoritative admission of the otherwise qualified person to his official position and prerogatives. Such is the common element in all primitive references to ordination. That its forms did not necessarily imply more than this is shown by the case of Barnabas and Paul,[1] who were thus "separated" by the Church at Antioch to "Apostolic" or missionary activity at large, though both had done similar work already, and Paul at least would have scouted the idea that his power or mandate for apostleship came to him in any way "from men or through man." Such "setting apart" simply meant that Barnabas and Paul went forth with the full spiritual support of the Church as in realised being at Antioch.

On the other hand, the solemn experience of ordination might be the actual occasion of a gift, already discernible to spiritual insight as fitting for a certain ministry, becoming manifest to others, as well as to its possessor himself, then or through its exercise subsequent to the ordination service. That is both psychologically natural and is witnessed to by the case of Timothy, when he was set apart for a certain

[1] Acts xiii, 1ff; Gal. i, 1.

ministry, seemingly that of an "Evangelist."[1] Either the occasion was, as Hort argues, that on which Paul chose him at Lystra as his special assistant (Acts xvi, 1-3); or, as the allusion in 1 Tim. iv, 14, to "the presbytery" as laying on their hands rather suggests, it was a later crisis in Timothy's career, presumably at Ephesus, where he was when addressed by Paul in 1 Timothy. In any case, the ministry in question, to which the grace-gift associated in some way with laying on of hands was relative, was a quite special one. It was personal to Timothy[2] and is not referred to as belonging to the ordinary and official ministry of the Church. This is made most clear by the reference to the fact that his gift had been vouchsafed to him at the first "through prophecy,"[3] *i.e.* by the conditioning aid of inspired speech, as well as of the laying on of hands. *No such feature entered into ordination proper.* Hence, for this and the other reasons given, we are not entitled to use the exceptional

[1] 2 Tim. iv, 5; *cf.* Eph. iv. 11, where Evangelists come after Apostles and Prophets, as the primary ministers of the Word, and before "pastors and teachers" of more ordinary type. All we know of Philip the Evangelist (Acts xxi, 8) as a quasi-apostolic preacher, is against the notion that he was ordained to that ministry. Probably, then, the laying of hands on Timothy, if with a view to some such ministry of preaching (1 Tim. iv, 13; 2 Tim. iii, 16f), was not in the nature of ordination, but like the "setting apart" of Paul and Barnabas to a special duty in Acts xiii, 1f.

[2] So too Paul's reference to his own share in the laying on of hands in 2 Tim. i, 5f, occurs in a context emphasising the special personal ties between him and his spiritual son.

[3] It is natural to connect this with 1 Tim. i, 18, "the prophecies which led the way to thee," as to the right man for the work; *cf.* Acts xiii, 1f. The "charge" to his son Timothy, which Paul is there repeating (cf. i, 3) also points to this.

case of Timothy's gift, as connected with the laying on of hands by Paul and some church's presbytery, to prove that ordination by laying on of hands conferred on the normal ministry of each church a fresh divine gift of spiritual power necessary to the efficacy, as also to the authority, of such ministry.

The picturesque terms in which Timothy's gift is described as needing to be "stirred afresh into flame," out of latency, are those of religious experience; and it is most natural to take the reference to the original "giving" of the gift in a similarly experimental sense, rather than in one of strict theory as to origin. *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, is the simple-minded principle involved in such language. That would be only in keeping with the whole genius of New Testament language, as popular or descriptive of the impression produced on the average observer, especially as regards the results on man. The Spirit is spoken of as "falling upon" or "filling" so and so on a given occasion, judged by the senses. The same is the case with the language of the Early Quakers touching the Spirit as manifest among them. In all such cases the deeper but obscurer spiritual antecedents are ignored.

Accordingly there is no good evidence that the Apostolic Church viewed ordination, at any rate in the case of Elders or Bishops and Deacons, whose ministries were at first the practical ones of governance and succour, as other than the solemn act of consecration to God's special service whereby a man, already qualified by Divine grace and duly elected by God's

people, was set apart and commissioned by the Church, acting through its natural leaders (whoever these might be at the time), to ministry as its authorised representative. Nor is it otherwise with the sub-Apostolic Church. The *Didache* (xv) says simply: "Appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek and no lovers of money and true and approved by testing; for unto you they perform, these also, the sacred service (*leitourgia*) of the prophets and teachers [the class whose inspired quality lifted them above the need of formal appointment]. Therefore [in spite of their lesser spiritual endowment] despise them not; for they are your honoured ones along with the prophets and teachers." Similarly, if with a different accent—due partly to the local Roman genius, with its love of ordered procedure, and partly to the special conditions in the Church at Corinth—the *Epistle of Clement* (*c.* 95) describes what it conceives to have been an apostolic provision for a due succession of elder-bishops in each church. "If," it says, the existing elders "were to fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministerial service," being "instituted in office by men of repute, with the concurrence of the whole church." This passage contains no suggestion that any transmission of grace for the elders' functions of "episcopate" was involved in the due manner of appointment. Yet it mentions the function of "offering up" to God the "gifts" of the Church, in the solemn prayer of Thanksgiving (*Eucharistia*), as the special prerogative from which the appointed elder-bishops had been deposed in favour of certain others seemingly more gifted for the purpose

(in virtue probably of their "prophetic" gifts, as *Didache*, x, 7, xv, 1f, would suggest). Hence there was every reason to dwell on the invalidity, and not only on the irregularity and injustice to "men of fair life" and blameless record, of the new ministry, had any such idea been in the writer's mind. Again there is no thought of "Apostolic authority" as transmitted to the duly appointed ministry as here conceived. The Apostles (so Clement believes) simply established an orderly system of appointment. As for "grace of orders," or special power thereby given of constituting the Eucharist valid or efficacious, such ideas are yet in the future, the results of a changed conception alike of "orders," of the nature of sacramental acts, and of the grace thus conveyed to believing souls.

II

So far, to the closing decade of the first century, when the sub-Apostolic age was already well begun, we have not found among the churches generally any trace of a permanent single president or bishop. Corporate authority, as ordinarily exercised in each church, was in the hands of a body of elders, its "presbytery." But at this date there was arising in certain localities, by a natural process of development through experience sketched in Bishop Lightfoot's essay on "The Christian Ministry,"—which still holds the field in its essential outlines—an additional office, that of the church-president or pastor. To it both the title "bishop" and the church's corporate authority in certain respects were soon transferred.

As a single officer, such a bishop was the natural symbol and guardian of unity in each church. It is in this aspect that we first have clear evidence of his presence, in the Roman province of Asia, as well as at Antioch, the letters of whose bishop, Ignatius, give us a sudden glimpse into Church life in those areas towards the end of Trajan's reign (*c.* 110–117). Lightfoot is justified in arguing that this new feature of Church organisation had the sanction of John, the sole surviving Apostle. As he expounds the new development, there is *no material change in the actual relations between the Church itself and its ministry.* But in Ignatius's own mind we feel a fresh emphasis on the ministry as the organs of God's will in church administration, and particularly on the bishop [1] as the special organ for safeguarding unity in each church. He even assumes the bishop's special inspiration, to ensure that he be "in the counsel of God" in his official actions. Still this makes it all the more significant that even he, while using every argument to enforce the duty of loyalty to the bishop's lead, as an earthly reflection, nay embodiment, of God's own fatherly oversight (episcopate) of the Church universal, yet never represents the bishop as a successor of the Apostles by ordination, nor calls any attention to the method of his human appointment. His thought moves in quite a different sphere, the ideal and not the historical.

[1] The abuses to which such a development of individual authority, like all other systems, was liable, are suggested by the arbitrary action of Diotrephes, "who loveth to have the pre-eminence," as depicted in 3 John, 9–10.

What, then, we learn from Ignatius of Church practice and thought in the matter is

(1) that now at last there is in certain churches a single "bishop," distinct in name, as in prerogatives, from his colleagues in the "presbytery" of the local church;

(2) that as its special representative for certain functions, particularly in the administration of the Sacraments, as essentially corporate acts, he is its prime organ of authority; and

(3) that the needs of the situation, when divisive and centrifugal tendencies were active among Christians both in thought and in habits, made strongly for growing emphasis on this unifying office in each church—quite apart from the exaggerated way in which Ignatius embodies that tendency.

But all this, though it means development in the internal organisation of certain churches, does not carry organisation beyond the particular church. Churches, like the synagogues of the old Israel, were still bound together only by the invisible but potent ties of spiritual brotherhood, such as breathes in the Eucharistic prayers of the *Didache*. There the broken Bread is a symbol of the Church, now scattered as the many grains of the loaf once were scattered, but soon to "be gathered together from the ends of the earth into God's Kingdom," even as those grains came to form one loaf (x, 2, 4; cf. xi, 5). Yet, real and effective in the inner world of the Spirit as was this corporate consciousness, it was only in each local church that

organisation proper—a thing of regular operation—was thought of or attempted. What ministerial links there were, such as the visits and letters of Apostles or other missionary founders of churches, or the coming of "prophets" impelled by the Spirit to itinerant ministry in some area, were far too informal and occasional to mean organised unity within the Church as a whole, and so make the one Church a single visible organisation.[1] Yet the spiritual solidarity of the Church was never greater than in those first days, when organisation to that end hardly existed.

This does not imply that attempts at inter-congregational organisation, when they came, were a mistake. But it does mean that the unity, and so the authority, of the Church, even so far as visible, does not depend essentially upon corporate organisation, still less upon any relatively late form of it, such as diocesan rather than congregational episcopacy. The earlier type was a natural development of the original internal organisation of the particular churches, which were the normal sphere of corporate Church fellowship and authority, as distinct from the occasional quasi-corporate action of conferences *ad hoc*, like the Jerusalem Conference. So Hort (pp. 66, 103f) says of Paul and Barnabas, when they appointed in co-operation with the churches in S. Galatia (Acts xiv, 23) elders on the Jewish model

[1] Failure to realise duly the difference between this (and nothing less), as the traditional "Catholic" conception of the Church, and the primitive conception of the One Church, so far described, makes Dr. Mason's elaborate essay on "Conceptions of the Church in Early Times," in *The Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, largely irrelevant for the purpose of the volume to which it belongs.

to guide their corporate life, that "with this simple organisation they entrusted the young Ecclesiæ to the Lord's care—to pursue an independent life." Similarly at Ephesus, in Acts xx, 28–32. So, too, Paul appeals to the common custom of "all the churches of the Saints" (1 Cor. xiv, 33, 36; cf. xi, 16), as a standard in things secondary, to be treated with deference by the partial experience and insight of any given church. But with these two norms to guide it, each local church or corporate fellowship of Saints was, even during its own founder's life, generally, and after that entirely, autonomous. It was its own human authority in the interpretation of Christian truth, the regulation of its own worship, and its watch over the well-being of its own members.

"Nothing perhaps," says Hort (p. 229), "has been more prominent in our examination of the Ecclesiæ of the Apostolic age than the fact that the Ecclesia itself, *i.e.* apparently the sum of all its male adult members, is the primary body, and, it would seem, even the primary authority. It may be that this state of things was in some ways a mark of immaturity; and that a better and riper organisation must of necessity involve the creation of more special organs of the community. Still the very origin and fundamental nature of the Ecclesia as a community of disciples renders it impossible that the principle should rightly become obsolete. In a word we cannot properly speak of an organisation of a community from which the greater part of its members are excluded. The true way, the Apostolic way, of regarding offices or officers in the Ecclesia is to regard them as organs of its corporate life for special purposes: so that the offices of an Ecclesia at any time are only a part of its organisation, unless indeed it unhappily has no other element of organisation."

So much for the autonomy of each particular or local church, as the fundamental unit of organised

Church life and authority. As to the conditions under which its official ministry took shape, Hort goes on as follows (p. 230):

"In the Apostolic age we have seen that the offices instituted in the Ecclesia were the creation of successive experiences and changes of circumstance . . . There is no trace in the New Testament that any ordinances on this subject were prescribed by the Lord, or that any such ordinances were set up as permanently binding by the Twelve or by St. Paul or by the Ecclesia at large. Their faith in the Holy Spirit and His perpetual guidance was too much of a reality to make this possible."

Further, as to the unique authority of the Apostles,[1] and the part played by them in moulding organisation in the various churches or working units of Church fellowship, Hort sums up thus (p. 230f):

"The Apostles were essentially personal witnesses of the Lord and His Resurrection, bearing witness by acts of beneficent power and by word, the preaching of the Kingdom. Round this, their definite function, grew up in process of time an indefinite authority, the natural and right and necessary consequence of their unique position"—one, we may also add, in strict accord with the analogy of missionary founders of churches in later ages and in all lands. "There is indeed no trace in Scripture of a formal commission of authority *for government* from Christ Himself." But in virtue of "the moral authority" just described, "and the uniqueness of their position and personal qualifications," there gradually "accumulated upon them by the spontaneous homage" of their converts "an ill-defined but lofty

[1] Even so moderate a "Catholic" as Dr. Lock (in a paper on Unity in *The Guardian* for October 17, 1918) writes as follows: "To Anglicans it has always seemed to represent . . . the principle that in the choice of the ministry there is needed not only the action of the Society, but also the action of the Lord Himself, exercising His own choice of leaders in His life time, and leaving with His Apostles the power to represent Him and to arrange for the future." Such concern "for the future" as is here suggested seems quite excluded by the universal belief that there would be no need for provision beyond the Apostles' own generation,

authority in matters of government and administration" (p. 84). "The government which they thus exercised was a genuine government, all the more genuine and effectual because it was in modern phrase constitutional: it did not supersede the responsibility and action of the Elders or the Ecclesia at large [*i.e.* the Christian people], but called them out."

Moreover, Apostolic authority was by the very fact of its unique nature untransmissible. No officer was appointed by any Apostle permanently to control after his withdrawal, by death or otherwise, the autonomy of any group of churches in virtue of quasi-Apostolic authority from outside or "from above"—as it has sometimes been phrased, in face of the very genius of New Testament religion and its doctrine of the Spirit indwelling the whole Christian people. Nor again did any Apostle devolve on any one within a local church any portion of his special authority, much less of "the commission for government," as "from above," which he might be supposed—erroneously, as we have seen—himself to possess *qua* Apostle. Indeed neither of these two notions of "Apostolic Succession" arose in the Church—as has been shown in another essay—until later than is generally assumed, until in fact "Catholicism" as a definite fresh phase of Church life and thought had become fairly full-blown.

since Christ's Return was expected within that time. But as to the other historical assumption underlying the principle above defined, Dr. Hort, in essential agreement with Bishops Lightfoot and Westcott, represents the opposite view among Anglicans. Nor does anything said by Dr. Mason really touch the truth of Dr. Hort's carefully considered statement of the matter, which amply provides for the cases which Dr. Mason cites in refutation of it, notably 2 Cor. x, 8, xiii, 10, where he overlooks the effect of x, 6, as showing that Paul's was indeed a "moral authority," as being conditional on a church's consent.

The laying of the ghost[1] of "Apostolic Succession," as a deterrent in the way of Anglicans seeking union with non-Episcopal brethren, is one great contribution made by recent scholarship to the problem of reunion, as a duty touching which head and heart are often divided in the same man. But there is another and almost equally important advance towards reunion by insight into historical reality, as distinct from terminology, which has long been overdue; for the facts are more patent, nor is their meaning really open to doubt. That advance would lie in the due recognition by Anglicans that the only form of "the historic Episcopate" which has Apostolic and sub-Apostolic, nay even early Catholic, sanction is the Congregational type. It is the office of chief pastor in a local church that is pictured in the letters of Ignatius, in spite of his claim of special inspiration for the occupant of that office. This recognition even Lightfoot never properly made in set terms, though the evidence he adduces and his reading of the same both require it. But it has been frankly made by various recent Anglican scholars. For instance, Dr. Sanday, replying[2] to a critic of the late Dr. Hatch, lays it down that:

(i) "If we are to give a name to the primitive communities[3] with their bishops, 'congregational' will describe them better than 'diocesan.'"

[1] Here we may simply cite the great service in this regard of Dr. C. H. Turner's essay on the subject in the volume already cited, and refer for more detail to the essay above on "The Reformed Episcopate," pp. 145f.

[2] *The Expositor* for 1888, pp. 332ff.

[3] *I.e.* the local units of Church life, the Christian people in an ancient "city," inclusive of the rural area about it.

(ii) Such churches were mutually independent in organisation: they did not form parts of larger organised bodies—such as Presbyterianism and Episcopacy alike presuppose.

(iii) When "synods" or "conferences" began to be held, in the latter part of the second century, these first "tentative efforts of the Church" at large "to find for itself corporate expression" were not yet part of a regular or "compact organisation." "The impulse to the federation of the churches arose out of the need for concerted action." Such synods were *ad hoc*, occasional conferences between representatives of congregational churches, with no definite limitation of the area from which their members were drawn. And "this state of things lasted on into the fourth century."

Here we have the essential feature of Congregationalism, whatever further "concerted action" it may provide for by customs of federated fellowship—what the early New England Congregationalists in particular called "consociation." That feature is the voluntary, non-coercive basis of the corporate fellowship between churches; and consequently the purely moral, rather than legal, quality of the authority belonging to any common decisions taken. Declarations of faith, resolutions, or general customs, not "ecclesiastical Law," result from such corporate consultation.

Two things, then, should be clear to the candid student of the early Church. First, that Congregationalism and its type of ministerial appointment and ordination, both expressive of corporate authority

as resident in the particular church or local embodiment of the Church at large, were the normal and characteristic modes of organisation in primitive Christianity. Next, that this could not be the last word in Church organisation, though it was the first. It had about it a certain immaturity, as not providing any regular or organised expression of the super-congregational and super-local spiritual unity of the Church or whole People of God. Some such organisation was necessary to the complete fulfilment of the Christian idea of a universal Fellowship of renewed humanity, no less than it was accordant with the analogy of the development of civil society. But in the absence of any *a priori* pattern, authoritative ordinance, or even expressed principle governing the matter, such wider organisation could come about only by tentative experiment in response to the prompting of vital needs, and in the first instance local needs. And in fact it came by the linking up of local congregations.

Such fresh integration might happen through the hiving-off from a growing city church of separate congregations, or by its missionary efforts in the district around; or again by the drawing together of city churches originally independent into a mutually dependent federation, by means of synods or conferences, which gradually became regular and habitual. But in the latter type of inter-congregational organisation the voluntary basis of membership for long held good. Withdrawal from the special bond in question was still possible, should the need arise; and so the autonomy of internal Church life was not affected. When this ceased to be so, and the bond became legal

and coercive, the corporate authority wielded by the larger body of Christian opinion changed its character, ceasing to be purely spiritual and Evangelic in principle, and becoming assimilated to the political methods of the world outside. It is just here that "Catholicism" took a step, not warranted by the Gospel of Christ and His Apostles, which needs to be reconsidered in the light of later and especially of modern experience.

As to corporate authority over ordination exercised by the Church at large, so as to qualify that of each church in the case of its own ministers, there is no early trace of it. Our evidence for the participation of adjacent bishops in the appointment and ordination of a congregational bishop begins with the third century. Any such custom probably arose at different moments, and developed at different rates towards its traditional "Catholic" form of three ordaining bishops, in various quarters of the Church. A document of the Eastern Church, and in its present form of the late third century or after, the so-called "Ecclesiastical Canons," throws a suggestive light upon its origins. "If there exist a paucity of people, and there be not yet a full company (πλῆθος) of those able to vote at the election of a bishop—short of (*lit.* within) twelve men—let them write to the neighbouring churches, in order that thence three chosen men may come and ascertain by careful trial him that is worthy." Here the function of the three delegates of neighbouring churches is to help an immature community to *start* its organised life aright by choosing the right man as bishop. Of participation in his actual election, or in the act of ordination which

consummated his appointment, we hear nothing, though probably the delegates *ad hoc* did take part in the latter, especially as there would as yet be no proper body of elders in so small a church.

This procedure in the case of a church not yet on its feet, so to speak, as an autonomous unit of organised Church life, shows by analogy how the custom might grow up that every election and ordination of a bishop was shared in by the leading officers of adjacent churches. In any case the development was a natural one in so brotherly an atmosphere of feeling, quite apart from any notion of church order or jurisdiction connected with Apostolic activity and authority in the first or missionary stage of the Gospel. Drawbacks in the way of possible abuse of such co-operation in each other's internal Church life, to the infringement of earlier autonomy, would not occur beforehand to churches with no experience of the kind to warn them. The transition from moral authority to one of custom, claiming to act as by legal right, is subtle and hard to avoid save in the light of the teachings of history.

Accordingly as time flowed on, and especially amidst common doctrinal and disciplinary problems which seemed to make solidarity and even uniformity imperative almost at any price to Christian liberty, safeguards to local autonomy were more or less willingly sacrificed, one after another, on the altar of what seemed indispensable conditions of safety. It was done *bona fide* for good motives. Still none the less it mortgaged certain future possibilities of the fully Christian type of religion, such as the spiritual

maturity of the rank and file, to which responsible liberty in autonomous Church fellowship, within the larger unity of the common Christian consciousness, is needful.

The centre and pivot of new developments in the corporate authority of the Church at large over its local embodiments, particular churches, was the single episcopate. At the first emergence of this true development of the local Church life, its authority was balanced by the consultative voice of the bishop's co-presbyters and by the control of the whole Christian people in meeting, which remained for long the final court of appeal and so the ultimate authority in each church. But as the episcopate's value as the rallying-point of unity proved itself more and more, amid the difficulties of the period from Irenæus to Cyprian (177–258), the special prerogatives of the office reacted on the forms of its appointment and habitual exercise. In this connection, a large part was played by the growing power of Synods, where bishops of the new Cyprianic type—representing not so much their several churches but the "episcopal order" in the Church, of which they now believed themselves the quasi-Apostolic governors—had the determining voice. Then it was, and only then, that the centre of gravity in corporate authority shifted definitively from the churches themselves to their bishops, now ruling more autocratically.

Nor was the change seen only in the new character of the episcopate, but also in the way the whole ministry, more and more dependent on it, was regarded and performed its functions. It was viewed as "the clergy," as contrasted with "the laity" in a sense

foreign to the second century, let alone the first. It performed its functions, too, no longer as representing the local church of which it was the specialised organ, but as members of a hierarchy owing its authority to sacramental commission from the highest grade in that hierarchy itself, as the sole channel by which Divine authority and sacramental grace could "validly" or securely reach any of the clergy. Elders, or rather "presbyters" in a technical clerical sense, largely devoid of the old natural associations of seniors chosen for moral guardianship of their fellow "saints," were now viewed mainly as the bishop's deputies for certain of his functions. Especially was this so where the multiplication of congregations under his charge made it impossible for him to perform even the sacramental offices, such as consecrating the Eucharist and conferring Baptism.

A momentous stage towards this new conception of the Episcopate—as also a factor in its further development—first appears in the third century, when the participation (at least) of presbyters in the ordination of the bishop gradually ceased. Originally, in keeping with the idea and history of the episcopal function in the primitive Church, as conceived by Lightfoot and Hort,[1] elders were (after the dying out of Apostolic founders) the sole ministers in ordination. Just when this was modified by the growing prerogative of

[1] "In the New Testament the word *episcopos* as applied to men, if not always, is *not* a title, but a description of the Elder's function." "Of officers higher than Elders we find nothing that points to an institution or system, nothing like the episcopal system of later times" (*op. cit.*, p. 232).

their official head, the single bishop, we do not know. We learn, however, that in the great church of Alexandria (a church in other ways marked by conservatism in its customs), down to the middle of the third century, the college of presbyters appointed and installed one of their number as bishop. Apparently no further special act of ordination[1] was thought needful, inasmuch as the "order" of presbyters was essentially, and so potentially, episcopal in its functions, though in practice certain of these had become ordinarily reserved for its president, as also acting head of the local church. The "Hippolytean" Ancient Church Order, too, in its earliest extant forms, implies that the ordination prayer for presbyters and bishops was the same, in certain parts of the Church at least, as late as the middle of the third century. Further, the Synod of Ancyra, early in the fourth century, implies that presbyters were wont, in the large area of Asia Minor there represented,[2] to ordain presbyters and deacons; and the synod only imposes certain conditions of order on the practice in future. It is most important for the idea of ordination, as being a matter of Church order or authority rather than transmission of sacramental grace (through Apostolic Succession by episcopal hands), that, as Lightfoot notes (p. 233), those con-

[1] This is the sense which the context in Jerome, our earliest witness, suggests, since he adduces the custom, along with scriptural evidence, to prove the essential identity of presbyters and bishops: see Lightfoot's Essay, p. 230f. No doubt there was at Alexandria some consecration with prayer at the bishop's installation; but that did not mean fresh "ordination" proper.

[2] So also in Alexandria and throughout Egypt according to Ambrosiaster, writing c. 375: see Lightfoot's Essay, p. 231 and n. [3].

ditions demand episcopal sanction for such ordinations, but not episcopal participation: the latter is tacitly dispensed with.

All this, as the late Bishop John Wordsworth recognised in his *Ministry of Grace*, has a vital bearing on conditions of reunion. For it renders possible, first, the recognition of all ministries which have presbyteral ordination as at least valid, even if by traditional standards irregular; and, next, such a modification of the present form of Anglican Episcopacy, by restoration of the principles underlying Catholic usage even as late as the third century, as may make it more truly catholic in an historical and spiritual sense. That must surely be part of the reform of Episcopacy, so as to re-assume a constitutional form as regards "the exact functions" properly "belonging to the Episcopate," which the Second Interim Report of a Joint Sub-Committee appointed in connection with the proposed World Conference on Faith and Order recognises as necessary, if the "historic Episcopate" is to become the basis of reunion. Only we must not confuse the validity of presbyteral ordination, in the case both of presbyters and bishops,[1] with what is

[1] The present Anglican rule is that presbyters join the bishop in laying hands upon candidates for their own office, but cannot validly ordain without him (this goes beyond the restriction of the Ancyrene Canon); while they take no part in the ordination of a bishop. A return to really early practice in these two points is of the more moment that the present Anglican usage obscures, if it does not virtually deny, the fundamental principle that there are only two, not three, "orders" (as the language of the Anglican Ordinal suggests), as distinct from offices, in the historic ministry. Bishop and presbyter are two grades of authority within that "order"

to-day called Presbyterianism, as a Church system contrasting with Episcopacy on the one hand and Congregationalism on the other. The fact is that ordination in Congregationalism too is by presbyters, *i.e.* teaching presbyters or pastors of particular churches, as in Presbyterianism itself.

III

All these three types of polity as they exist to-day, while having analogies with this or that stage in ancient Church organisation down to the fourth and fifth centuries, owe some of their present features to the attempt to avoid abuses or extreme developments in the "monarchical" direction. Such abuses had become part and parcel of the episcopal system before, during, and at the close of the medieval period.

Apart from the final outcome of this tendency in the Papal monarchy of Christ's Vicar on earth, the medieval or diocesan type of Episcopate (largely developed by the territorial organisation of civil society) meant increased concentration of Church authority in the hands of the bishop. Bishops were in practice auto-

which even a secondary stratum (c. 300–350) of the "Hippolytean" Church Order (the earlier basis of which prescribed the same ordination prayer in both cases) calls "the priesthood" or "the clergy," endued with "the common Spirit of the presbyterate." So "the common and like Spirit of the clergy" is there contrasted with that of the lower order, the diaconate, directly "under the power of the bishop." The "power" of this higher or "great" Spirit a presbyter receives; but according to this latish addition he has not the power to give it. Hence he cannot ordain "clergy," though in the ordination of a presbyter (but not of a bishop, at this date) he co-consecrates with the ordaining bishop.

crats in their areas of the Church, very much as barons were in their areas of the State. In both spheres the people were in state of pupilage and disfranchisement, while "parish priests" were largely curates or deputies of the bishop, within defined limits of authority, with no real standing as his normal councillors or co-presbyters. In other words, the Episcopate had ceased altogether to be of its older type. In particular, spiritual authority and the methods of its operation were adjusted to the notion of "the laity" as in permanent pupilage, under the sacramental system as then conceived. The notion of "the word of the Gospel" as a living experience in all Christian souls, making them equally the free citizens of a holy commonwealth, responsible in the measure of their gifts for its local welfare, both individually and corporately, —all this was now in abeyance, forgotten if not inconceivable. With its revival, however, a reformation amounting to a revolution in the theory of Church authority and ministry became inevitable.

Reformation went to different lengths and assumed various forms in different quarters. The Reformed Episcopacy of the Protestant *Ecclesia Anglicana*, while it reduced in theory the gulf between clergy and laity, was largely conditioned by the influence and control of the English Crown. This was autocratic in temper, and felt that autocracy in the Church was the true ally of autocracy in the State: "no bishop, no King." Thus the Episcopate persisted in its medieval diocesan form—nay, without even that measure of constitutional self-government, by means of diocesan conferences and convocations of the clergy, which the

medieval Church had enjoyed. Accordingly certain Christians, both clergy and laity, zealous for a renewed type of Church life, sought to give it corporate expression in Church-fellowship congruous to the inward spirit of the Gospel, as brotherly love and mutual aid in a "holy walk" under the New Covenant. The attempt was repressed by the mixed authority of Church and State in the interests of national uniformity. Then when some of the more earnest reformers, bent on "purity" in forms of worship and Church-fellowship according to the authority of the New Testament Scriptures—the true channel of Apostolic authority and grace—felt bound in conscience towards God to persist in their attempts, they found that the Episcopate was the agency used by the Crown for the enforcement of its policy of Church uniformity at any price.

Hence "Church authority" gained a new meaning; and the protests against it, as a usurpation of the sovereign rights of Christ over His Church, took fresh means of asserting what was felt to be true Church authority, the direct authority of Christ acting by His Spirit in the corporate conscience of His own people, as informed by Apostolic teaching and practice. Thus definitely as the result of renewed vision of the true seat of Church authority under the Gospel, viz. in Christ's people as such, there arose the modern Presbyterian and Congregational types of Church organisation, which have now a long history behind them.

What differentiates the two systems is the nature and degree of corporate authority exercised by the

Church at large over the particular church or congregation, as also by church officers or "elders" when once appointed. In Congregationalism collective authority, whether of presbyteries or of larger Church bodies, is purely spiritual, and limits itself to spiritual means of influencing the judgment of the particular church, which is in the last resort autonomous; whereas in Presbyterianism, like Episcopacy, Church authority is also legal, and in the last resort coercive of the action of the churches composing a whole territorial Church, which is its proper corporate unit. Of these two types all non-episcopal communions are but various species.

IV

As to the future. It is a momentous fact, and full of promise, that the joint Episcopal and non-Episcopal declaration already cited should state that all such "Christian Churches not accepting the Episcopal order" "came into being through reaction from grave abuses in the Church at the time of their origin; and were led in response to fresh apprehensions of divine truth to give expression to certain types of Christian experience, aspiration and fellowship, and to secure rights of the Christian people which had been neglected or denied." Further, it expresses the hope that "each of these Communions would bring its own distinctive contribution, not only to the common life of the Church, but also to its methods of organisation." Similar, but more widespread, is the feeling within these Churches in relation to Anglican Epis-

copacy. They recognise its formal continuity with "the historic Episcopate" as it existed in the 'Catholic' Church at the Reformation, and still exists; and that the non-Episcopal Churches broke with it in too reactionary a way, when forced into separation from Anglican "prelacy" and its uniformity at any price. To-day the scions of the various Nonconformist communions appreciate much of the positive witness of the Anglican Church system, and particularly the sense of large corporate solidarity which Episcopacy (independent of any connection with a National Church) fosters in a special way. It is true that Presbyterianism shares in this quality. Yet apart from the special historic claim which Episcopacy can make as a unifying link with the past, and with the 'Catholic' Church in the present (divided though the Episcopate at large actually is), its ideal of "Fathers in God,"exercising a constant oversight of personal leadership and influence, has a practical contribution to offer to effectiveness through unity of organisation. Only there seems no good reason why these advantages of diocesan episcopacy should be purchased at the price of other principles of corporate fellowship and authority, which once coexisted with a more qualified episcopacy, but in these latter days have had to find a home and witness in special communions called into being to represent their vital powers and value. The time seems ripe for such wasteful sacrifice to cease all round.

The starting-point of a higher harmony of Church methods hitherto found apart must be a common loyalty to the Church of the New Testament, no longer

gone to for arguments against this or that polity as it exists, but rather for the germs out of which each seems to its friends to have grown, germs which once coexisted side by side in the Apostolic Church. "The Apostolic age," says Dr. Hort (p. 232f), "is full of embodiments of purposes and principles of the most instructive kind," not yet worked out to full realisation and adjustment. "But the responsibility of choosing the means" to this "was left for ever to the Ecclesia itself, and to each Ecclesia, guided by ancient precedent on the one hand and adaptation to present and future needs on the other. The lesson-book of the Ecclesia, and of every Ecclesia, is not a law but a history." This history we have tried to review in its main pertinent features, in order to learn its lessons.

As touching corporate Church authority and its relation to the ministry, the special subject of this essay, the chief morals of the Church's whole story seem to be these. Such authority as attaches properly, according to original Christianity, to each particular church—as the basal unit of concrete, realised, habitual Church fellowship and organisation—should be given the fullest possible scope compatible with such organised solidarity as may adequately express the whole Church's corporate mind. The latter's authority must normally be, and be treated as, greater than that of any of its parts; but the way in which it operates should ultimately be that of purely spiritual or moral authority, commending itself to the religious conscience of each church as at least not repugnant to what it surely holds as essential truth. For "whatsoever is not of faith," in this sense, "is sin" to those

who comply with it. But such spiritual repugnancy between the mind of the part and the whole would hardly occur when the two were in really organic relations by habitual fellowship, through proper representation of the part in the organised life of the whole. That is, due organisation of the Church throughout its whole being—much as in Presbyterianism, or even in modern Congregationalism and prospective Anglican Episcopacy—through a gradation of representative bodies with constitutional authority, rising to a supreme assembly with plenary authority, would in practice secure, so far as any method can, the unanimity of the whole Christian people.

In such a reorganised Church the Episcopate, as the regular organ of corporate Church authority, should play a leading and unifying part, in its two historic forms, the congregational and the diocesan—within the particular church and within the inter-congregational organisation fostering the Church's corporate unity. Each type should exist as modified yet vitalised by the co-operation of the other. Behind both would lie the Church's corporate authority, expressed in either case through its own form of election by the Christian People. As to ordination, where at present controversy centres, the ideal would be that in the re-united Church both types of Episcopate should share in the act by which full jurisdiction is conferred upon its ministers. For the essence of ordination, as maintained in this essay, is formal conferment of right to act in the name of the Church, whether as particular or as universal. It

is only as symbol of fresh jurisdiction, in this case over a fresh body of Church-members, that existing non-episcopal ministers could accept further ordination than that which they already possess ; and the correlative of this would be a like extension of jurisdiction, by a similar act, in the case of Anglican bishops as representing their communion.

There may be other ways of securing these results ; but in effect it must be fresh jurisdiction, through the proper corporate authority on both sides, that is sought and obtained. In view of the radical difference between the " Catholic " and " Evangelical " interpretations of Divine Grace as related to Ordination—as also to the two Sacraments proper, which enter deeply into the problem—we must be content to leave that aspect of a second ordination (*not* re-ordination, a contradiction in terms), and of future ordinations in a re-united Church, deliberately indefinite ; so that the view which commends itself to each man's conscience before God may be freely open to him. This principle of liberty in things non-essential, with a view to the fuller sway of the " most excellent gift of Charity " in all things—which Augustine himself made the prime condition [1] of unity and validity [2] in the one visible Church—

[1] See Dr. Turner's essay on " Apostolical Succession," pp. 179, 190f, 195.

[2] High Anglicans should bear in mind that, if non-episcopal ordinations lack something of what they consider essential to formal validity, the same is no less true of the Erastian election in use in their own Church. " The action of the Society " itself, to cite Dr. Lock's words quoted above (p. 213), does not determine who shall be ordained bishops ; and so God cannot be held " covenanted "

already obtains within Anglicanism. For, as the joint committee already cited observes, "acceptance of the fact of Episcopacy [in a constitutional form], and not any theory as to its character," "may be the more easily taken for granted as the acceptance of any such theory [with its sacramental implications] is not now required of ministers of the Church of England."

The sum, then, of the matter seems to be this. It may be taken as widely agreed among Episcopalians and non-Episcopalians, in the light at once of New Testament and really primitive evidence and of the general teaching of their respective communions since the Reformation, that the right to exercise corporate authority is *the essence* of what is conferred by the human acts of ecclesiastical appointment and ordination to the Christian Ministry: in other words, it is valid jurisdiction for certain Church functions, within the sphere covered by the corporate authority of the ecclesiastical body represented by those ordaining. As long as there are differences in this last respect between communions, which may yet recognise each other as parts of the one Church universal, there remain also differences of view as to the *regularity* or adequacy of the commission conferred by each, and consequent limits to the jurisdiction of its ministry. By agreement to combine in the forms of appointment and ordination the authority of all the re-uniting communions, there

to do for such what on Catholic theory is needful to the validity or assured nature of the office. Thus Anglican ordinations also are not valid by formal tests.

would result a *fully valid* and regular, a truly catholic, type of ministry, with a correspondingly enlarged sphere of jurisdiction, that of the Church from which it would then receive its commission.

That commission, like all existing ecclesiastical commissions, would be both human and divine. The exact nature of the Divine grace operative in and through the duly ordained, by virtue of their ordination, should be left an open question for individual faith. But inasmuch as it is agreed that the grace qualifying a Christian man for special ministry in the Church, resting as it does on vocation, is of God ; also that the human agents in the selection and ordination of those thus called are indwelt by God's own Spirit ; the commissioning act is not a mere human one in the ordinary sense, in which it is contrasted with the divine, but is divine-human. In fact, it is "churchly" in the true Christian sense of the word. As such, it carries with it the divinest kind of authority which can be conferred by any formal act among men, that of the Body of Christ visible on earth, however limited in practice the degree and range of its actual exercise may be by local and temporary conditions. Such limitations, so far as due to human imperfection, are capable of removal by spiritual progress ; and a great step forward may be secured by such reunion as we are now contemplating as possible.

INTERCOMMUNION

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SYNOPSIS

The subject to be viewed in relation to the present spiritual crisis.

I

Its crucial character: behind concession or refusal of intercommunion lie opposing vews of what constitutes Christianity —"Heresy" may cut Churches off from Christ, "schism" need only cut them off from mutual fellowship: are non-episcopal Christians heretics or only "schismatics?"

The "validity" of Sacraments touches both their individual and their corporate aspects: on the corporate side no Eucharist *of a section* can be completely valid, but this only limits, without cancelling, its efficacy as a means of grace to the members of that section—The strict "episcopalian" view goes back on New Testament principles, ignores the fruits of grace in character, or, alternatively, leaves "valid sacraments" unnecessary to salvation—The growing recognition even by strict Episcopalians of the full work of grace beyond their own frontiers demands, as its logical completion in act, some measure of intercommunion.

II

The threefold relation of the Holy Communion, to (*a*) the individual believer, (*b*) the particular congregation or denomination, (*c*) the whole Body of Christ: difficulties arise mainly in connection with (*b*), and turn on the principles and methods of *incorporation*—There is a real sense in which the Lord's Table is *also* that of a particular congregation, whose joint presence at it is the spiritual expression of a natural (*i.e.* Divinely sanctioned) grouping, which cannot be ignored: new rights of intercommunion must not override old rights of functional distinctness—But existing distinctions do not correspond with either natural affinities or spiritual fact: and the absolute distinction between episcopal and non-episcopal

Churches is not endorsed by Anglican tradition or doctrine—Intercommunion the only effectual way of saying so—For all but the exclusive school of Episcopalians, the obstacles are matter of policy rather than principle: but even "policy" demands action in the direction of liberal convictions, in reply to very definite action in the other direction.

III

Spiritual promiscuity would be fatal, and is desired by none: what is wanted is *limited* intercommunion, sufficient to express the degree of unity already recognised—Three points emerge: (1) "spiritual hospitality" should be officially recognised; (2) on great occasions the existing practice of common worship should be extended from the circumference to the centre of worship; (3) all recognised conferences of representatives of different Churches to discuss reunion should include, if only as a witness, a united Communion—This would, above all, clear the way for such recognition and regularisation of non-episcopal Ministries as will be necessary before the Church can be organically one, by shewing that alignment with the historic Order casts no slur upon the past efficacy of such Ministries.

IV

The reactions of such a step on the world outside, as a repudiation by the Churches of any magical pretensions on behalf of the episcopally-ordained Ministry, and as meeting the new demand for "One Church" as the logical implicate of faith in "One God"—What is wanted is the right institutional expression of the "interdenominational" spiritual unity already existing: a recognition of the One Body already shaping itself within and beyond the various "bodies"—The sacrament of unity is not only the obvious expression, but, as an *efficax signum*, should help to produce the unity it expresses.

INTERCOMMUNION

The soul of man, someone has said, is like a plant which blossoms but once in a hundred years. That we are very near such a blossoming period our whole generation seems, in various ways and degrees, to be aware. The way in which the end of the war has been taken by a great majority of British people is evidence of a widespread spiritual sensitiveness. The world appears to be, for the moment, more open than ever to spiritual impressions. We have, as it were, caught a passing glimpse of the Invisible on the stage of history. We have watched the unveiling of a great new purpose of God, and felt instinctively that it cannot end here. After so complete a revelation of Divine Justice, God cannot possibly cease to act. Mankind awaits His next step forward, and dreams of "some dawn of Divine mercy" (as Dr. Gilbert Murray has put it) to follow upon the night of judgment.

And the Church, too, is haunted by visions of what might be, and also by memories of other visions seen too late—of new worlds dreamed of but never brought to birth. The Christian conscience knows, in a way the world knows not, that upon us—our sensitiveness and pliability, our daring and determination—depends

the realisation of God's plan. That is, I believe, the hidden impetus, at once Divine and human, behind the new passion for reunion. The difficulties before the Church are overwhelming: some of her own making, some the natural products of these times. The mistakes which might easily be made are so numerous that, forgetting the proverb, we avoid them by committing, too often, the greater mistake of doing nothing. One thing at least there is to be done which could not possibly be a mistake: that is, to heal our differences and unite our forces. Not the least gain of such reunion would be the collective wisdom made available for dealing with a common problem. Also, apart from the economy of strength for coping with our common difficulties, the difficulties would themselves be halved by the great disarming of outside prejudice and distrust. But when it comes to practical measures, the dread of mistakes crops up again. If the soul of man is indeed about to blossom, we are warned that it generally spoils the flower to assist the opening of the bud. And so time passes, and opportunities with it, and things stay very much where they were.

I

Now it is the purpose of this essay to set forth the arguments for a definite step, that could be taken at once, towards the goal of Christian unity—a step which, once taken, might carry us well past this period of hesitations. But it is precisely the step which, so far, has been regarded in some quarters with horror, as a betrayal of trust, and in others as something

desirable indeed in itself, but not to be contemplated at present. Intercommunion between Christians not "of the same communion" seems, even to this second class, an anomaly, a contradiction in terms. Without condemning the Eucharists of non-episcopal churches, as the first class do, they urge that a united Communion should come rather as the crown and symbol of unity achieved than as a stage upon the way to it. Is this a necessary or a logical reserve? The question is central, vital, and final. If intercommunion cannot rightly be conceded, no other *rapprochements* mark any real advance. They merely serve to distract attention from the real issue, which is, "What constitutes Christianity? What cuts a man, or a denomination, off from Christ?"

It is not proposed to argue here yet again the historical precedents for intercommunion. It is easy to show that, for two centuries after the Reformation, men whose Anglicanism was undoubted saw nothing monstrous in admitting non-episcopal Christians to communion in the Church of England, nor even in receiving it at the hands of non-episcopal ministers abroad. If there were aloofness and mutual condemnation between Anglican Churchmen and English Nonconformists, they marked a dissension as to polity, not as to the means of grace. The Nonconformist being regarded as in a state of schism, there could be no question of sharing with him in the sacrament of unity. But this did not involve disallowing the Nonconformist sacrament as a means of grace to faithful Nonconformists. It is heresy which may cut sects off from grace for themselves: schism, as such,

only cuts them off from fellowship with each other. And the Church of England has never pronounced a particular polity to be necessary for the grace of sacraments. It was only with the Tractarian movement that the view became common, which is now too often taken for granted, that "valid sacraments" depend upon "valid Orders," and these in turn upon "the Historic Episcopate."

Now it is no use blinking the fact that, for many who hold this view, its crucial importance is bound up with a conception of the "Sacramental Presence," which is frankly medieval. For them a "valid" Sacrament is one in which one can count with certainty upon the Elements being, by the act of Consecration, so affected that they "become" in some absolute sense the Body and Blood of Christ. The mode of the Presence may be variously stated, but the essential point is that it is not regarded as in any way related to the faith of the communicant, and is definitely identified with the Elements. Where they are, the Presence is. And the only guarantee of the "Real" (in this sense of localised) Presence is the valid Ordination of the minister. It is probable that nothing in the argument which follows will influence those who hold this theory. Its implications, and effects, will be referred to later.[1] For the moment it is enough to say that it is not the theory of the Church of England: it is not therefore one which an English Churchman need argue against in such a discussion as the present. Objections to intercommunion based upon it do, and will, arise *de facto*. We are concerned with

[1] P. 260.

those which have, or may seem to have, a *de jure* background: and these all fall under the head of "Order" rather than "Grace." A defective Order may, in a word, restrict the efficacy of Divine grace: but there is no ground in either Scripture or really ancient tradition, such as the Prayer-book reflects, for regarding the grace as itself dependent on a particular Order.

In one sense it is true that no sacrament can be completely "valid" till it is the sacrament of the whole Catholic Church of Christ. In so far as the Holy Communion is a symbol, bond and source of unity among Christians, through the oneness of them all with Christ, the Eucharists *of a section*, to which only members of that section are admitted, do not reproduce the true and full conditions of Christ's ordinance. From this point of view there is no really and completely "valid" Eucharist to-day; and the validity of sectional Eucharists may be said, on their corporate side, to vary inversely with the exclusiveness of the church or sect which celebrates them. But this does not touch the individual side of such sacraments, nor deny their efficacy as means of grace to individual partakers who "draw near with faith," except in so far as the benefit to each is restricted by the limited corporate significance of his act. That act is one of approach at once to Christ and to his brethren in Christ. However much it means to him, it could mean more and give him (so to speak) more of Christ if it involved a wider sense of fellowship with others, a conscious adhesion (in the act of "eating of the one loaf") to a larger body of mankind: and, *pro tanto*,

his communion fails of what it might be and is yet meant to be.

But to say that, because the purview—the *Weltansicht*—of his Eucharist is onesided or narrow, therefore such a man cannot find Christ in it, is to forget that "where *two or three* are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst." And to claim that what may perhaps be called a defective *technique* in the ordering of his Communion Service—a historic lesion which the individual "schismatic" has only inherited, and probably neither understands nor endorses—is enough to cut him off altogether from "the Real Presence" of Christ, is to go back on the very first principles of the Gospel. "According to your faith be it unto you."[1] "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith finding active expression through love."[2] "The sure foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His, and, Let everyone that nameth the Name of the Lord depart from iniquity."[3] The full and strict sacramentarian position, on which opposition to intercommunion is based—the view, that is, that only in an episcopalian Eucharist can one be sure of "receiving" Jesus Christ—involves both abrogation of the law of faith and a complete discounting of Christian character as evidence of the presence of Christ. Alternatively, if it be admitted that the same Christ reaches in some other way those who cannot reach Him sacramentally, and by "purely spiritual" (as against sacramental) processes brings forth in them the same fruits of good living, one is

[1] Matt. ix. 29. [2] Gal. v. 6. [3] 2 Tim. ii. 19.

left wondering what is the advantage of "valid" sacraments, or why we should still be so anxious to safeguard them. For clearly there is no necessary connection between being a "Catholic" communicant and being like Christ; and Christlikeness can, apparently, be reached some other way. Nor does it take us any further to describe that "other way" as an operation of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, acting apart from the Second: to say, for instance, as one has heard a serious theologian say quite seriously, that "our dear Nonconformist brethren have the Holy Spirit, but we have Christ." For this is simply disguised Tritheism, which in turn is no mere inconsequent heresy, but polytheism on a restricted scale.

It would seem, then, that insistence on the view that, as a means of grace to the individual faithful partaker, no Communion is effectual which is not (as Ignatius has it) "under the bishop," involves a repudiation of bed-rock Christian principles. It also does violence to the best instincts—to-day almost obstreperously vocal—both of the Church and of the world, which recognise the unity of the Christian spirit, wherever found, and demand some institutional expression and embodiment of that unity, in place of existing divisions that have become largely unreal. And, as a matter of fact, the essential Christianity of faithful non-episcopal Christians has been of late quite frankly allowed in the very quarters where intercommunion would be most conscientiously resisted. Lord Halifax, in a presidential address to the English Church Union in June 1918, went so far as to admit that "in whatever degree we see the Christian life being lived, there we

may be certain God's grace has been given, and as long as any soul faithfully corresponds with the grace given to it, that soul is living in God's favour and, as such, we have no need to be disquieted about its spiritual condition." The address goes on: "It is only as we keep this truth steadily before us that we can arrive at anything like a clear conception of our duty in regard to the members of the different religious bodies into which Christendom is split up, and what our attitude in regard to the members of those bodies, and to those bodies themselves, should be. That duty will be two-fold: in no degree to call in question the working of God's grace in those separated from us, but, on the contrary, to rejoice in all that God has done and is doing for them. We should give them all the sympathy and extend to them all the co-operation in spiritual things in our power, that sympathy and co-operation only being limited by the necessity of not compromising principles we are bound to maintain ourselves." This last sentence is, of course, so worded as to cover any extent of reserve when it comes to putting such words into acts conformable: for what would Lord Halifax be conscientiously able to do in the way of "spiritual co-operation" with, say, the Baptists? And there is throughout, in the use of the word "bodies" for "churches," a virtual claim that these "bodies," however Christian, are yet outside the Body of Christ. But when we move a little further towards the "Centre," and reach such men as the Bishops of Oxford and Winchester, we find them prepared to subscribe the epoch-making terms of the "Faith and Order" Sub-committee's

second interim report. "The second fact which we agree to acknowledge is that there are a number of Christian churches not accepting the Episcopal order which have been used by the Holy Spirit in His work of enlightening the world, converting sinners, and perfecting saints."

Now the practical question here is, having gone so far, can we logically stop short of translating such words into acts, and especially into the act by which our Lord Himself willed that His followers should express their common relation to Him and to each other? The strongest verbal formulæ will not convince the world, at any rate, that we seriously mean reunion, while the very expression in act which should most naturally and logically follow is the one which is still postponed or ruled out. Not that anyone asks for general and unconditioned intercommunion, which at present would be an artificial and unwholesome thing. But are we not by our own words committed already to such a measure of intercommunion, according to agreed principles and under agreed safeguards, as shall give public and symbolic endorsement to the already general mutual recognition of a common status as churches and as members of Christ?

II

After all, what does the Holy Communion really mean and involve? It has, of course, a threefold aspect, in relation to

(*a*) the individual believer;
(*b*) the particular congregation or group of congregations;
(*c*) the whole Body of Christ.

In the first of these relations, the Holy Communion embodies, expresses, and so also develops the Christian life-process of progressive incorporation into Christ. If this were its only bearing and exhausted its significance, intercommunion between "all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity" would be the obvious and inevitable expression of the admitted unity of this life-process in all believers, whatever their denominational allegiance.

It is in connection with the other two relations that difficulties emerge. Where any corporate act is concerned, methods and principles of incorporation claim respect. Ideally, as we all admit, the Church should be one—a single organism, "the Body of Christ." As a matter of fact, Christians are organised into churches or denominations, shaped no longer only by geographical conditions (as in the first centuries) but, in some cases, by temperamental peculiarities or special doctrinal emphases. We cannot rightly *either* regard as irrelevant (and therefore possibly final) the existing organisation of churches *or* treat their

organic unity as if it were a *fait accompli* instead of an ideal. This ultimate unity, when it has been reached, will require, as its most fitting symbol, a unified sacramental system, so that everywhere there will be only one Table of the Lord and one rule for admission, however the setting of the Feast may vary. Only then will unqualified intercommunion fully correspond with spiritual fact: till it does, it is premature, because "unreal." It would be an ignoring of the fact that, as at present administered, the Holy Communion is not only the expression of the Christian life-process in the individual; it is also the social meal of the particular local congregation, expressing and developing the mutual incorporation of its members one with another. Admission to it is the mark of full membership in the larger groups in which local congregations are united—whether geographically, as national Churches, or according to temperamental or doctrinal tendencies, as denominations like the Independents or Baptists. And it will finally express the joint-incorporation of all such particular Churches, or groups of Churches, in one visible Body of Christ on earth. All these facts forbid promiscuous and unqualified intercommunion now.

It is true that some deny the rightness of this second relation of the Holy Communion—with local Churches or denominations. As another contributor to this book (Dr. Carnegie Simpson) has expressed it, "There is nothing denominational connected with the Holy Communion: it has only to do with the Lord, the individual soul, and the Church Catholic." The Table, in a word, is always the Lord's Table, and not that of a particular

Church. But, on the other hand, there is a special relation between a company of people bound together by common interests or affinities, living in one place, habitually meeting for worship, and so treating their spiritual life as, in some sense, a joint concern. Here there is the ministry of member to member within the Body, as well as the dependence of all upon the Head. And it is natural that this joint life of the congregation should express itself in what becomes *their* Sacrament—the social meal of that congregation or group of congregations—without ceasing to be also the Sacrament of the whole Church. And this in turn involves some sort of rules for admission, lest the reality of it all should be diluted by the intrusion of others to whom it did not mean the same thing. Here, as has been said above, respect for the methods and principles of incorporation must limit the practice of intercommunion. For local churches, with their larger groupings, are not merely arbitrary (though convenient) stages between the amorphous spiritual unity of all believers, as such, and the ultimate organic whole to which we look forward. They have an element of finality in them too, being based on restrictions suggested by nature and the conditions of human life. Men do normally live in, belong to, identify themselves with, localities ; they have temperamental affinities which do normally lead to the formation of groups within communities, and also link up such groups with similar groups elsewhere. Nationality is itself a form of such affinity which can override all other human groupings by superimposing its own principle of unity and difference. Thus the distinctions of churches

which meet us under the second of our three relations are all rooted in human nature as well as existing in fact. They have, in other words, a certain Divine sanction. Measures of intercommunion which wantonly blurred them would not be in the true line of progress. In a word, even when organic unity has been reached, it will still be natural, and therefore Christian, for each man *normally* to communicate with his own particular congregation. Denominations and national Churches will stand out as joints and limbs in the one Body, which will still need to have many members if the unity achieved is to be really organic. Thus the right of intercommunion, which this essay seeks to establish, will not, in any case or at any stage, be a sanction for spiritual promiscuity.

On the other hand, while admitting a relative finality in such articulations and groupings within the ultimate ideal unity, it is impossible to recognise in those which actually exist such absolute finality as is implied by a rigid refusal of intercommunion across the barriers. Such refusal, in effect, means one of two things. *Either* it results from quite undue emphasis on the second of our three aspects of the Holy Communion, its function as the common meal of a particular church or group of churches—in which case it is an intellectual duty, in the interest of doctrinal balance, to reassert the other two—*or* it carries with it (1) explicit denial of the valid incorporation as churches of Christ of certain bodies of Christians, who therefore have no right to share a symbolism which, in their case, does not correspond with fact, and (2) implicit denial of the true incorporation in Christ Himself

of the individuals who have formed such pseudo-churches.[1] For neither denial can the authority of the Church of England be claimed. On the contrary, its ethos, formularies and tradition alike condemn them both. There is thus no need for English Churchmen to apologise for recognising a status like their own, and a common relation to Christ, in *all* "congregations of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same,"—"necessity" being interpreted according to Article VI. Nor yet need we hesitate, recognising this, to claim the right to give it expression in the most expressive, because divinely appointed, way.

Such claim to a guarded right of intercommunion with non-episcopal Churches at the present time, when a

[1] The fact that this latter denial is hardly ever formulated nowadays, even by those who most uphold the former, must not be let obscure the fact that the two can only logically be made together. If individuals who are truly members of Christ come together, even in temporary association, for the purpose of "mutual spiritual upbuilding" (τῆς εἰς ἀλλήλους οἰκοδομῆς, Rom. xiv. 19), and the better expressing of the Divine life which moves in each, then their corporate life *is* the life of Christ in their community, and the latter, like its component units, is a real part of the Body of Christ. Therefore, in its measure, it can exercise the same functions and use the same symbolism as any other part. The so-called catholic (*i.e.*, rigid episcopalian) view, which is the one serious obstacle to such intercommunion as is here demanded, can only really be maintained by denying that individuals outside episcopal churches are very members of Christ at all. Such a denial Liberal and Evangelical Churchmen have always refused, on doctrinal principle, to make. Charity and deference to obvious fact have compelled the great body of High Churchmen also to reject it. But the sacramental implications of this new attitude have still to be faced and acted upon.

speedy healing of divisions, felt to be both scandalous and largely unnecessary, is urgently needed, is only a claim to recognise by appropriate action—

(1) an obvious fact—the spiritual oneness of all true believers in Christ ;

(2) an admitted ideal, which is its corollary—"that there may be one flock under one Shepherd" ; and

(3) a growing conviction—that the true line of advance is through spiritual unity to its corporate expression in institutions, and not *vice versa.*

This fact, this ideal, and this conviction are of vital importance to the whole position of Christianity in its conflict with the world to-day. Everything depends on making them so explicit that the world cannot help but recognise them. Till we express them not in words only but in acts, the world will not be so convinced. And, in proportion as we stress the significance and centrality of the Holy Communion in the Christian system, we make it more and more plainly the only satisfying way of expressing the oneness of our common Christian experience and ambition.

At present the real obstacle to action in this direction by many groups of English Churchmen is one not of principle but of policy. It is the fear least, by denying in act what is, to certain other groups, the sacredness of divisions and barriers belonging only to the second of the three aspects of the Holy Com-

munion which we have recognised, we should in effect defer, instead of hastening, the higher ideal unity ahead.[1]

On the other hand, to maintain the present purely static attitude is to postpone that ideal unity for ever. The only unity that can be reached along the other path—that of rigid refusal to communicate except with episcopally-ordered churches—is *either* one of splendid isolation, unrecognised by the only churches we are willing to recognise, *or* one of absorption in the system of the latter, in a "Catholic" Church which (unless the Greek and Roman Churches change both rapidly and radically) will leave a very great part of Christendom outside. In that direction forces, relatively small, but united and enthusiastic, are steadily working to draw the English Church. The only way of resisting what we hold to be a false progress is for those who regret it to move in the opposite direction. It is only by recognising, by some degree of intercommunion, how far the spiritual unity of all true believers has already brought us towards that ultimate organic unity, which a unified (though not necessarily uniform) sacramental system will fitly endorse and consummate, that we can really hope some day to reach it. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye received them (*ἐλάβετε*, i.e., at the time of praying) and so

[1] Here one may point out that the Church of England Confirmation rubric is, at most, an assertion of this second aspect in its bearing upon *our own* members, by defining what constitutes full membership of the Church of England. It erects no barrier against those whose claim to communicate with us would come under the other two aspects of the Sacrament.

it shall be to you."[1] We shall only get fuller unity by recognising and acting upon that which, in these late years especially, God *has given*. And, if we admit the three-fold relation of the Holy Communion stated at the beginning of this section, intercommunion on such a scale as shall at once typify and consolidate the degree of unity already achieved offers the only logical and Christian line of further progress.

III

What, then, is meant by such "limited" intercommunion, which shall at once express the interdenominational unity already admitted to exist, and maintain a protest against spiritual promiscuity? For this last, as all Christians who think agree, would not only impoverish our Christian life, but put organic unity out of reach by dint of making it seem superfluous.

First and most obviously, the principle of "spiritual hospitality" should be officially recognised. (Unofficially it is largely in force.) That is, wherever (as happens constantly in young countries or in the mission field) a Christian finds himself unprovided for by his own denomination, he should be free of the sacraments of any other church with which he chooses to identify himself, without being called upon to do more than produce evidence of full membership in his own church. If ministrations by his own church became available, he would be required either to relinquish these rights of hospitality or to become a

[1] St. Mark xi. 24.

full member in the church of which he had been the guest. This rule would sufficiently emphasise the duty of definite churchmanship, and at the same time provide for the case of (say) the presbyterian communicant who spends a part of each year in an English village where there is only the parish church to attend. One has known of such a case, where Communion was refused unless the person consented to be confirmed—a step which would involve breach with the church to which he belonged and with which he had to worship for the rest of each year.

Secondly, on occasions when, for the moment, higher principles of unity override the distinctions of ordinary life—when, for instance, a great national joy or sorrow makes men forget their differences of party or class—common worship ought to be taken for granted, and it should not be impossible for communicants of varying allegiances to come together in one Communion. Here, again, in proportion as we stress the Holy Communion as the "central Christian service," the only act of common worship instituted by our Lord Himself, we cannot remain content with the big afternoon services of an extra-liturgical sort in which the war has increasingly allowed us to unite. The unity and its expression must penetrate from the circumference of worship to its centre. But, as throughout, such occasions should be explicitly "occasional," and governed by rules; and full communicant membership in any given church should be a condition of sharing in the united Communion.

Thirdly, the present stress of seeking after closer relations opens up some obvious opportunities. All

over the world, larger and smaller groups of *representative* men and women—the epithet is crucial—are meeting to discuss the problem of unity. Those who have attended such conferences for some years past know how the situation has developed. At first a self-denying ordinance was taken for granted, that where members of different Churches met for consultation, they should not attempt to meet for Communion. A stage was reached when, for instance, Anglican members consented to take part as onlookers in Nonconformist celebrations, and Nonconformists were invited to do the same at the Anglican service. But now this situation has grown intolerable. Where but lately it was a matter of conscience to refrain it has become almost a matter of conscience to reject such covenants. The unreality of it all has grown so clear. And nothing, perhaps, more shows the Divine nature and necessity of this Sacrament than the spontaneous urging to make ourselves one *at this point*—at this point *first*, as a step towards further unity otherwhere, and no longer *last*, as a pledge of unity achieved. After all, if a sacrament is an "efficax signum"—a symbol which *effects* the thing which it signifies—and if the Holy Communion is, above all, the means as well as the symbol of unity with our brother Christians as well as with Christ, then intercommunion should be the chiefest help to unity, and produce the atmosphere in which consultation can best bear fruit. Therefore, in spite of the unhappy wrangles over the Kikuyu Communion—a controversy which was "pre-war" in spirit as well as in time—let it be recognised all round that at all meetings of such bodies as the "Faith

and Order" Sub-committee, and the many other less official committees and conferences now being held with the same end in view, a united Communion Service, celebrated according to the rites of that element which is in the position of host at the time, should, if the members wish, be a part of the programme. This would not, be it noted, involve what is called "inter-celebration"—the participation of several ministers in a rite which was not that of any one of them—which is a much more debatable and probably indefensible step. Nor would it sanction promiscuous intercommunion of the general membership of the churches. It would still be an exceptional measure, only adopted when *representative* members of the various churches met, *as such*, to discuss and promote their reunion. (If desired, church authority might be invoked to decide what were such "representative" conferences, and to discourage abuse of the new privilege by other less responsible gatherings.) It would throughout be most important to leave the churches under the sense that, though intercommunion is a great step forward, organic reunion is the only sufficient goal; and we must not be let feel that we have reached it before we are there.

At the same time, intercommunion, even on this limited scale, would in many ways carry us further towards that goal than anything else. Above all it would proclaim the common belief of all who assented to it that there is no difference in the essential Christian life-process as it appears inside and outside the historic episcopally-ordered churches. If I may quote Dr. Carnegie Simpson again: "The real difficulty about

episcopacy is the supposed implicate that episcopacy is the line of demarcation between 'Church' and 'not-Church': it is here that intercommunion would save the situation." It would do so by tacitly abandoning the claim that only in the episcopalian Sacrament is "the Real Presence" found, and admitting instead that, in and for their own Communions, the ministry of non-episcopal churches is as true and effectual a ministry of the Word and Sacraments as, in and for the Anglican Communion, is the Ministry of the English Church. It would thus take the whole sting out of that demand for some sort of re-ordination—perhaps mutual—on which members of the "historic" churches will probably have in the end to insist, as the final step to organic reunion. At some stage all "sectional" ministries will have to merge in one "catholic" ministry, if from intercommunion at the Altars or Holy Tables of Churches we are to pass on to joint-communion at one Table of the Lord. And it has been admitted, in the second interim report of the "Faith and Order" Sub-committee, that "the position of Episcopacy in the greater part of Christendom, as the recognised organ of the unity and continuity of the Church, is such that the members of the Episcopal Churches ought not to be expected to abandon it in assenting to any basis of reunion." Consequently, as Mr. Shakespeare has frankly stated it, "reunion will never come to pass except upon the basis of episcopacy." [1]

And so, at some stage, in some way, the other ministries will have to be aligned and harmonised with the historic order. But it should, when that

[1] "The Churches at the Cross-Roads," p. 178.

time comes, make the whole difference to the attitude of those whose Orders will have to be recognised and regularised, if they have tangible proof that the step they take casts no slur at all upon the completeness and adequacy of their previous ministry, as a true ministry of a true church of Christ, but merely acknowledges that it was not—what, after all, it did not claim to be—the recognised, traditional ministry of the whole universal Church of Christ : that, in a word, they are not being admitted to minister the Sacraments for the first time, but to minister them for the first time *with general consent* as the Sacraments of the whole Church. The formation of one vast episcopal Church of the British Empire and the English-speaking world—modern and progressive in the best senses, yet claiming with perfect historic justice the same historic continuity, the same organic cohesion throughout the world, which are the boast of the Church of Rome—would surely do more than anything else to undermine and break that Roman "exclusiveness on principle," which will be the last and most stubborn obstacle to the final reunion of all Christendom.

IV

But we can, and must, look yet further ahead. Another gain indirectly springing from intercommunion boldly faced might be a reunion wider still—the capitulation of the world to the Church. It would come in two ways. First of all, we should have repudiated what, more largely than some of us think, keeps the modern mind aloof from the Church—the suspicion of magic about our central

Christian ordinance. There is no denying that such suspicion is not only justified but even, as it seems, deliberately encouraged by a school of so-called "catholicism" which has in effect abandoned the true catholic ideal. That ideal is surely "to sum up all things in Christ." But the effect, if not the aim, of the modern pseudo-catholic is to form a coterie which despises and despairs of the world. "Sodalitatem faciunt, Catholicitatem appellant,"—if Tacitus will excuse the liberty. For it is no good hoping to get intellectual men of the twentieth century to accept what the intellectuals of the tenth century were able to believe. The mystery of Sacraments must be explained along some other and more moral lines than those of the miracle of the Mass. Between us and Transubstantiation flow the Renaissance, the Reformation, the French Revolution, the scientific movement of the nineteenth century, and a score of other streams of thought. For mystery the modern mind is prepared, if not thirsty. Psychology even accepts and is fascinated by the moral miracle of conversion. But for miracle along the lines of magic this age has no use. And there is no denying that, where the validity and efficacy of sacraments are bound up with the *technique* of their celebration and the hieratic qualifications of the celebrant, we are still at least on the border-land of magic. To that dim region the modern mind will never return—not even if it could be shown, which it cannot, that the fruits of good living are best secured by a religion which holds to that part of the past in the teeth of the present. It is with our generation as President Wilson, at Mount Vernon last summer, said of Washington and

his friends. They "looked out upon the world and saw it whole, saw it with the light of the future upon it, saw it with modern eyes that turned away from a past which men of liberated spirits could no longer endure." Intercommunion would be a silent but significant proof that British Christendom is also "turning away from the past" and "seeing the world whole, with the light of the future upon it." And to such a Christendom men will surrender.

But, secondly—a point which will appeal to the unintellectual also—men will give in to the Church when they see *her* a whole. The average man is a better catholic than he knows. He realises that the logical corollary of "One God" is "One Church," and that the objective witness of such a Church is needed to substantiate his own inner experience of God. The war has, in great measure, multiplied this experience; but so far there is little to show for it. One reason is that men still outside the churches are waiting for those within to face the logic of their faith in God. Take, for instance, this recent letter from the front: "Thousands here in France have realised that God is everywhere, and they are waiting the advent of One Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church as the outward and visible sign of that eternal fact." It is true that Divine ubiquity is not in itself the same as Divine Unity. But what men do in effect believe in is One Divine salvation in many forms. The world knows well enough the sort of lives that help to save it. In them only will it recognise true "members of Christ"; but it sees that at present they belong to different bodies. The coming together of all such in One Body is needed to force the world's

consent to be saved. And the point of all the foregoing argument is that by the simple, yet so difficult, step of intercommunion—recognition of the One Body *in* the many bodies—we might take the biggest, the most far-reaching, move towards uniting Christendom and saving mankind.

What is needed is some right and constant institutional expression for the present state of spiritual fact. The divisions we are supposed to keep up "on principle" most of us do not really feel. What we do feel is the growing necessity, as a matter of principle and utility alike, to bring our profession and practice into line with our current convictions. There must be thousands who would endorse these words of a young staff officer writing from France: "I think sympathetic revolutionaries are wanted, and that it is the duty of people who care much for their Church, but more for Christianity undifferentiated, to precipitate suitable crises." There is a new sense, in both Church and world, of what "Christianity undifferentiated" means—and a sense that this is what really matters. It is Christians as such who are going to save the situation, if it can be saved, not Christians of any particular lineage. Only, to realise their full power and produce their full effect, they need to be, not scattered units, but an army, a Church: functionally still various, but organically one. It is not that Nonconformists need to become "Churchmen," but that all sorts of Christians need to be one Body. Already we feel the uniting force of the One Spirit. And it seems to point to the Sacrament of Unity as the way of reunion. Surely it is a case for "precipitating a suitable crisis," to square outward expression with inward fact?

REUNION AND THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE

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SYNOPSIS

I

Reunion, to be effective, must be popular. Fatal if superimposed by authority upon an unready or unwilling people. Many difficulties in the road, *e.g.*, religious principles have largely been mediated through the organised Churches; in the give and take of any reunion it will be difficult for the admirable patriotism of the Churches to give way to the higher patriotism of the Church. Again, Conservatism appears to be the inevitable characteristic of ecclesiastical organisation. The force, then, which can make reunion popular must needs be strong and really vital. Where can such a force be found—of internal growth, common to all branches of organised Christianity?

II

A conscience about re-union alone fulfils the conditions. The war has shown us the way. The question of International Peace an example of the efficacy of a conscience. In 1913 International Peace was a sentiment: to-day practical politics. That is because men have acquired a conscience about war as criminal folly, so they say "Never again." The same true of Social Reconstruction. So a Christian conscience about disunion must be created, so that we say of disunion what all good men are saying of War: "We must hate it. We cannot tolerate it any more."

III

What is the situation with regard to such a conscience?

We have the rudiments of a negative conscience on the matter: division recognised as wrong; a weakness to Chris-

tianity, theoretically a harm to Christ. But this recognition is practically ineffective ; it is a matter of prefaces and perorations, not of the main body of the Church's argument. But war conditions are opening our eyes, and enlarging our opportunities.

IV

What is the conscience which we should wish to see in operation ? One which aims at complete Catholic unity, yet ready to begin where it is already possible, viz., between Anglicans and Free Churchmen.

Partly negative: disunion strictly intolerable. Mainly positive. The affirmatives of conscience are often forgotten, but they get things done.

The desiderata of a Christian conscience on reunion.

1. The greatest drag upon Evangelisation is disunion, and Evangelisation is primary work of Church.

2. The greatest silencer of Witness is disunion, therefore its damage is damage to God's plan.

3. A clog to communion is disunion. To acquiesce in something less than Christ meant for His Church is to obstruct our communion with Him, and our communion with all who love the Lord Jesus.

If Evangelisation, Witness, Communion, are all hindered by disunion, disunion should be a grief to our individual souls, re-union a prime objective of Christian strategy.

REUNION AND THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE

I

Reunion to be effective must be popular. It must, in truth, spring from the common desire of Christian folk. It would be quite fatal if it were imposed by authority upon an unready or an unwilling people. That way leads direct to Jenny Geddes' footstool. The Liturgy may be excellent; but if its object is to unite people in a common worship it cannot be said to have succeeded when it has provoked a riot. I could quite imagine that it might be possible to write a Liturgy of reunion, if the writers were sufficiently secluded and adaptable; but that would not ensure its being used. In a movement like that which this book is intended to promote you may begin with the clergy, but if you stop there you stop the movement. Yet in the popular sphere the difficulties are very great; for while you may have a general sentiment in favour of unity, it is chiefly secured by ignoring the problems which lie in the way and the principles which really divide us; and a union of "eyewash" is as likely to stand the test of practice as a union of "Liturgy."

We have to recognise the difficulties from the outset. Many of them arise from causes which in themselves are wholly admirable. Religious principles, for instance, have generally been mediated to us through the organised ministration of our Church, whatever it may be. If religious principles really grip a man they become more to him than anything else, as the testimony of the martyrs shows. But in reunion it may appear to a man that some of these very principles are being invaded; and then there will not be wanting champions to call the faithful to arms, nor faithful to respond to the challenge.

Everybody knows how extraordinarily easy it is for man to deify prejudices by calling them principles; and that cool judgment of the Conference Chamber which has at last pronounced a venerable tradition to be something less than an essential, will certainly be condemned as rank treachery in many a church and tabernacle where the tradition has come to be regarded as one of the very staves of the Ark of the Covenant. Moreover, it is frankly difficult for people to take the widest views. The politics of the parish pump have their full counterpart in religion. The ecclesiastical parish pump is handy, homely, concrete and, in spite of its ostensible purpose, a satisfactory engenderer of warmth. But it is hard to stir enthusiasm for such a vague and distant ideal as the universal Church of Christ. Nor will the *esprit de corps* of local religious organisations make the task easier. Human nature being what it is, the element of competition has been a great stimulant to local effort; and if at times that competition has not exactly followed the lines indicated by

St. Paul, but has in many cases tended to become a lamentable body-snatching rather than a provocation to good works, the difficulties will be increased. And on a larger scale it will be hard for the admirable patriotism of the churches to yield pride of place to a higher patriotism of the Church. Again, conservatism of a rigid type seems to be the inevitable characteristic of ecclesiastical organisation. When a man has learnt all that he knows of the truth of God and the light of life through one channel, he is apt to be rigidly opposed to any alteration in its banks or any diversion of its course. Even in days like these, when all is being changed, there are few more potent rallying cries than that of the faith of our fathers. Indeed I am not sure but that the very flux and eddying of events and the submerging of ancient landmarks does not lead men to crave for something solid, stable and well known, such as they find in their own Church. They will therefore be the more suspicious of anything which may seem to weaken either the organisation of that Church or its distinctive witness.

Nor must we forget the inherited traditions of mutual distrust and the positive teaching of some mutual hostility. There is no doubt that prophetical denunciation is not merely a duty, it is one of the most potent methods by which God keeps human life sweet and clean. But in practice many of our prophets—and some of them major as well as minor—have succumbed to the temptation of adding the office of editor to that of prophet; and when the denunciation has appeared it is found to be singularly concerned with the sins of other congregations. A man once said to me very

bitterly, "I may denounce the brewers in my church: there are no brewers there. I may not say a word about the grocers' licenses: we are all grocers." But the reaction of such one-sided prophesying is inevitable. It tends to accentuate the lines of difference, and, in the minds of the ordinary church members, to buttress them with a certain tendency towards self-righteousness. The effect of the reaction of a partial denunciation is to be seen most clearly just where it is most unfortunate from our present point of view. For if Free Churchmen are not unaccustomed to listen to denunciations of "priestcraft" and churchmen to denunciations of schism, and both have learnt to associate these sins with certain definite denominations, it will render it far more difficult than otherwise would have been the case to break down the barriers of disunion.

These are some of the difficulties which inevitably confront those whose business it is to carry the movement for reunion to that constituency which must ultimately accept it, if it is to be any value to the ordinary church member.

II

Where, then, can a force be found equal to the task of removing, or at least of mitigating, the difficulties—a force which is not imposed from outside, but is of internal growth, and is of itself common to all the bodies which it is hoped to unite? I answer at once—Conscience. A conscience about reunion alone fulfils the conditions. It is a force of the highest order when

once it is moved to action; it is a force which is of internal growth in each communion, and it is a force which is common to all.

I doubt if people realise to the full how conscience can operate upon a corporate body. We normally think of it as an individual thing. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all"—true. It doth also make heroes. But its power is as truly exercised in a nation or a church as it is in an individual. It can move a nation to the depths of cowardice or the height of heroism as powerfully as it can move a man. The war has shown us in a remarkable degree the efficacy of a conscience. In 1913, as far as the great bulk of any nation was concerned, international peace was a sentiment. In 1918 international peace is one of the first problems of practical politics. Why? Because during these years men have acquired a conscience about war as a criminal folly. They thought of it before, for the most part, as an unfortunate necessity. It was as firmly entrenched as necessity could make it. But to-day conscience has awakened and men are saying everywhere "war must not be." Men are no longer concerned to argue about its necessity. The whole of that entrenchment has been blown into the air. They are concerned to argue to-day only along the lines of ways and means. That is an amazing proof of the power of conscience. What men call necessity is, from a secular point of view, the strongest thing in the world. It is used as a reason for not doing what we ought to do. It is put forward as a sufficient cloak for every imaginable evil. But let a real live conscience touch it, and it withers away. And the question

of social reconstruction illustrates the power of conscience as much as that of international peace. Why is it to-day that everybody, without distinction of class, is in favour of social reconstruction? It is because the conscience of the community has been aroused. Rich man's son and poor man's son have found themselves together in the trenches. They have lived with each other in that stark intimacy which active service alone can bring. They have shared many privations together and succoured each other even in the hour of death. They have

> "The lips of men who have brothered men
> By more than easy breath,
> And the eyes of men who have read wi' men
> In the open books of death."

And they have written home of their experiences to castle and hall, and comfortable middle-class home and suburban villa, and have told of this real brotherhood of service so that the comfortable classes have said: "These men who have been the brothers of our sons in the war cannot be less than their brothers in peace. Whatever economic 'laws' may say, they must be given decent wage, decent house, proper leisure and a chance of life." Nor is this sentiment confined to the comfortable classes. The whole nation is aware, in part at least, of its debt to the fighting men; and it knows that to send them back to sweated industries and slum hovels, to conditions which degrade labour to slavery and rivet before the eyes of the workers for their whole life the spectre of unemployment, would be black shame. In other words, the nation has a conscience in the matter, and as long as that conscience

remains awake and operative no political power, no plea of necessity, can prevail to prevent it operating as the strongest possible force in national life. That is the force which we must awaken in the Christian community if reunion is to be anything more than a pious dream.

There have always been members of the different Christian communities who have had a conscience about reunion, just as in the State there have always been men who have had a conscience about international peace or about social reconstruction. But in the secular world it was not until that conscience operated in a popular sense that these things became anything much more than the shuttlecock of parties. So in the Christian community it will be idle to look to the enlightened men because they are convinced and expect the work to be done. I would go further. It would be disastrous to bring about any reunion upon the basis of the enlightened men. It will not be until the conscience of the ordinary church- and chapel-goer has been sufficiently aroused, or, to put it in a corporate way, it will not be until there is a real conscience of the separated churches upon the sin and folly of disunion, and the glory and wisdom, and one may add, the Christian duty of reunion, that we shall be able safely to rebuild the breaches in the city of God.

It will be when in their conscience Christian men are saying of disunion what they are saying of slums, "This thing is intolerable, we will not have it in the future," that disunion will go. It will be when Christian men are saying of reunion what they are saying of the League of Nations: "This thing we must

have," that we shall succeed in possessing, not merely a force which can overcome the difficulties, but a sure foundation upon which to build.

III

What, then, is the present situation with regard to a conscience upon reunion? We are in a state of blessed generalities. We possess indeed the rudiments of a negative conscience, for everybody will admit that disunion is a weakness, a curtailment and, theoretically at least, a wrong. But how far does this take us? Only a very little way. It is not merely that we have not got beyond the stage of talk. Talk there must be, and in plenty, before anything can be done. Conferences, pulpits, councils, convocations—yes, and the individual's platform of his own hearth-rug—must play their part in this talk. But there is no sense of urgency behind the talk, and a sense of urgency is essential if talk is ever to proceed to action. Urgency is not in itself, of course, an unmixed boon. It can be a blessed stimulant, yet without hard thinking and sound principles it can be an irritant poison. But it must be there if anything is to be done, and it is the quality of urgency which is conspicuously lacking from our conscience upon reunion. If I may use the analogy of the platform, I should say that it is still with us a matter of prefaces and perorations, and not of the main body of the Church's argument. In a preface a man often pays lip service to these general principles which are agreed but tiresome. In a peroration he points to those goals which are desirable but out of reach. In the main argument he speaks about that in which his

hearers are interested, or ought to be interested, and develops his ideas and summons their support for the matter which is of paramount importance. In the main we must classify our pre-war conscience upon this matter as belonging to the order of the preface. That is to say, everybody was agreed that the position was theoretically intolerable, and having said so, the bulk of Christians scurried off to more congenial themes. With some ardent souls it had reached the stage of the peroration. That is to say, they had had a vision of the delights and virtues of a united Christendom; they had talked about those happy days in stirring periods, and painted pictures which could even quicken to enthusiasm the deadly respectability of the church-goer. But the whole affair remained a peroration, and perorations are not really valuable unless they touch with the glory of hope that which has been the matter of hard thinking in the main argument. And the burden that should lie upon our hearts is that the Christian conscience did not carry the theme of reunion to the main argument of the Christian quarrel. Christian folk did not say, "This is what we ought to hear about, and what we will hear about." Satisfied with a preface or doped with a peroration, they considered the matter as adequately disposed of. That, for the generality of church members at least, was the situation before the war.

Now, however, a new and disturbing factor has arisen. The real facts have suddenly and brutally taken our respectable conscience by the throat and asked it what in God's name it meant by being asleep. And conscience has been very seriously disturbed.

In days in which religious folk have really wished to give our men the best that Christianity could offer, they have suddenly realised that one of the main obstacles in the way of that gift is our own disunion. In days in which men have worked and fought and suffered and died together, they are beginning to want an answer to the question, "Why not worship together?" In days which have witnessed the death and burial of the futility of undenominationalism, and have welcomed the birth of inter-denominationalism, people are beginning to put a strong emphasis upon the "inter" and only a lesser emphasis upon the denomination. Amazing tales have floated back to us from the front—tales of barriers broken, of prejudice trampled upon with complete success or blown to the four winds in gusts of Homeric laughter, and people ask, "Why not at home also?"

Already even at home experience is urging its claims in new and unexpected directions. Mothers in England of the straitest sect of Anglican orthodoxy, who before the war never thought of a Nonconformist minister without distaste, or of a Roman priest without suspicion, have letters in their possession written by minister or priest containing precious messages from the boy who had died in their arms; letters which have taught them that though the profession of faith may be different from their own, the resultant character is precisely that which they have been taught to regard as Christian. Men at the front have discovered—and have written home to say so—that it is not the churchmanship *per se* of the padre that has made him a living force with officers and men, it is his own personal char-

acter. And true Christian character they have seen to be not the sole product of any branch of the Christian church but the product of all.

Accident has come to reinforce this testimony and experience, and presses us in a similar direction. I would hazard the opinion that the army authorities took a great step in the direction of unity when they put all chaplains into practically the same uniform. We are such children of clothes. One supposes that it was known that the human head was still the human head, whether it was covered by biretta or a top hat, and that a cassock did really conceal two legs; but when church and chapel were practically indistinguishable in khaki, it paved the way for a recognition of their identical humanity and therefore for a cooler examination of their difference in doctrine. We know how doctrine has got entangled in clothes. The prophets have prophesied in terms of clothes; the priests have borne rule by means of clothes and the people have seemed to love to have it so. There is the doctrine of the black gown, of the "vestment," of the white tie, of the gaiter. And even to-day, if a parson develops an adhesion to one school of thought, the odds are that he will appear in a stock of a different colour or a coat of a different cut. But when the Army standardised the chaplain's clothes it probably wrought more than it was aware. If you strip doctrine of its distinctive clothes you have an excellent test as to what is really vital. It is only doctrines which have a right to live that can stand the test of nudity, and there are not a few of our present differences which, if they were naked, would be very much ashamed.

Here then are various contributing causes to the awakening of a conscience, at least on its negative side. At home, the realisation of what our divisions cost us, and of the diverse ecclesiastical origins of Christian character is gaining ground and preparing the way for a new attitude. In the Army, Christians are moving much faster and with a note of impatience towards reunion; while outside the Christian communities our divisions are increasingly regarded, according to the observer's point of view, with genial amusement, despair or contempt. Generally speaking, the non-ecclesiastical mind can see neither their necessity nor their use. And the soldiers are likely to do much on their return, not indeed in the direction of active propaganda for reunion—they do not care enough about the organised churches for that—but in the direction of a complete indifference to a Christianity which is disunited, and which does not seem to care enough to throw its energies into the work of reunion.

One more fact remains to be recognised. Representative men of different bodies are meeting in conference. Scholarship reinforced by good will and principle informed by love are striving to bring their contribution with a fearless honesty to the solution of the problems. It is not my part to speak of the factors which may decide such questions as inter-communion. But this much is clear, that no one attends such conferences with the members of other Christian communions without a real delight and a heartache: delight because of the new sense of brotherhood which the widened circle brings, and heartache because of the barriers which seem to prevent that inter-communion

which ought to be the first possession of all who serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus a conscience grows in some of the leaders which may have startling results.

I venture to sum up the situation at present as follows (I write solely from the point of view of our conscience in the matter). While the leaders are in part at least awake to the ills of disunion, while some of them are burning in soul because of the divisions of what ought to be the seamless robe of Christ and because of their clear vision of the blessedness of unity, the great bulk of Church members are even now only oscillating with a sort of puzzled discomfort between the stage of the facile preface and the stage of utopian peroration. The conscience of the Christian community does not seem strong enough to do more than utter vague and disjointed ejaculations in the main body of the Church's argument, while it bows down before the obstructive altars of the great god "But!" Nevertheless, there is a general murmuring of impatience at division, a swell of disgust without and of godly discontent within; and if this feeling be not wisely guided and fearlessly and speedily led, it may well end in the disaster of open contempt or the anarchy of individual action.

IV

If, then, a conscience is for all reasons desirable, what is the conscience we should wish to see in operation ? First and foremost it must be a conscience with regard to the reunion of the whole of Christendom. Were it possible to achieve complete reunion tomorrow between the Church of England and the Free Churches, that conscience ought not to be appeased. The unity of Christendom is our goal, nothing less is tolerable.

It is inevitable that men will seek reunion chiefly along the lines of their natural bent. That, of course, is especially marked in the Church of England, with its historic and doctrinal links with the organised Catholic Churches of East and West, and its equally historic and doctrinal links with the Protestant Churches.

This central position—a position which doubles the opportunities and, perhaps one may add, trebles the difficulties of the Church of England—may ultimately be found to be the channel through which God's will of union is to be mediated to Christendom.

So within the Church of England conscience stirs some men to work in the direction of Rome, and others in the direction of Protestantism. But that which should satisfy our conscience is in truth neither of these, because it is both ; and that fact must always be remembered if damage is not to be done to the very cause which we have at heart. It is quite true that as a matter of practical politics it may only be possible

to advance along one line at the moment. Approach to Rome seems to be possible only by the road of complete submission. That to any convinced believer in the catholicity of the Church of England seems an impossible road. The road to Protestantism is, if difficult, nevertheless open. It seems natural therefore that attempts should be made in this direction. That is all a matter of practical politics. But as far as conscience is concerned, the point that I wish to make is that we must resolutely refuse to be satisfied with an ideal in either of these two directions alone.

That does not mean in the least that nothing is to be done. You cannot blame a man who believes that he ought to move east, if, when he finds the door to the east banged, barred and bolted in his face, he does not move at all. You can and ought to blame a man who believes that he ought to move to the west, if he does not do so merely because the open door has been obstructed with thorns. It seems to me idle to talk about longing for reunion, and not to move in the only direction which at the present time can offer results. I say nothing of the claims of kinship and of identical national interests and outlook, though these things ought no doubt to count. There is no reason why Christianity, any more than charity, should not begin at home. So if we possess a conscience upon reunion, it would seem to call to all of us, even if we cannot work in the direction of Protestantism, to lend such a movement the help of our prayers, our sympathy and our guidance. This much the inheritors of the Evangelical tradition in the Church of England have a right to claim from their High Church brethren. They

have the right to ask that only the fundamental principles in the direction of the bolted door must be adhered to, and that very much which High Churchmen themselves might personally dislike may be regarded as matters of give and take. They have a right to ask that things which have been trumpeted as principles, and made the war cries of controversy in the past, may be re-examined with immense candour and with a real and vital belief in the present rule of the Holy Ghost, in the light of the strongest determination to move in that direction in which God has given us an opportunity towards the mending of the rents of the robe of Christ. If the present situation, however, has placed the emphasis of opportunity upon a certain direction, that does not in the least alter the fact that the ultimate goal of reunion is Christendom. High Churchmen have a right therefore to demand that the inheritors of the Evangelical tradition in the Church of England and Free Churchmen without, shall not so press their particular point of view as to make it impossible in the future to find any reasonable basis of reunion with Roman or Greek. We are out to reunite, not to disintegrate in the name of unity; and nothing is more clear than that forgetfulness of our ultimate goal would ruin our immediate goal. Nothing is more certain than that you do not achieve unity by drawing a fresh line of division on a slightly different orientation, nor will two Churches of England be a pleasant result of attempted union. After all, a man is not really better clad if he tears up his shirt in order to patch his trousers. This is where conscience becomes not merely a stimulant, but also a guide, provided that it is driving

us towards the ultimate goal. It stimulates us to act along the only possible direction: it guides us, while we act in that direction, from paths which would make the ultimate goal impossible.

With the goal of nothing less than the reunion of Christendom before it, the Christian conscience ought to get to work upon the present situation. It will, no doubt, be partly negative in its operation. In popular estimation, a conscience is that which is always saying "Don't"; and where that is so, it too often succeeds in presenting religion to us as the dullest and most flavourless kind of life. Often enough, when we make our tentative moves in the direction of new adventure, from the days of our childhood onwards, it is conscience, we are told, which says to us "Don't." We may be taught theoretically that it is a guide, but in practice it is usually a barbed wire entanglement. And yet in truth the affirmatives of conscience are the strongest things in the world. This war has seen the complete triumph of affirmation over negation. Germany said of our new English armies: "It is impossible to raise, equip and train amateur armies capable of meeting our trained professionals in the open field. It can't be done." We said: "It must be done." And it was done. Germany said: "It is impossible for America to raise in time an army that can fight in Europe, and if you could raise and train it you could not transport it to Europe, nor feed it when it is there. It can't be done." The Americans said, and our Navy said: "It must be done." And it was done. But why in the face of every probability did "must" thus triumph over "can't"? Because behind "must" there

was the driving power of a united conscience. To-day the problems of a disunited Christendom seem almost insoluble. To many the dream of a reunion seems to be doomed for ever to be a dream. Earnest souls invite us to look at the situation with a calm eye, to deal with sober facts, and when they have piled Pelion on Ossa with their difficulties they produce the result, and the result is this : "It can't be done." And they are quite right, if there is no force capable of turning the ordinarily impossible into the extraordinarily possible.

For my own part, I hotly decline to believe that what the State can do on the material plane for the welfare of her sons, the Church cannot do upon the spiritual plane for the salvation of mankind. Only, as in the secular affair so in the ecclesiastical, there must be a consensus of conviction as a driving force behind. It was not by any class that the new armies of England were built up and became effective. It was by the common conscience of the community. It will not be by the efforts of clergy and ministers that reunion will be achieved. It will be by the driving force of the common conscience of Christian folk. This is why it is of grave importance that the spade work of reunion should be done not merely in the sheltered gardens of conferences, or in the prepared soil of the cultivated minds of leaders and thinkers. The spade-work must also be done in the open fields and upon ground hitherto uncultivated. The individual consciences of the Archbishop of Canterbury or of the President of the Free Church Council will not achieve success. It is the corporate consciousness of all Christian people that must be stirred.

And surely there is enough to stir it! There are memories of past controversies which we cannot but deplore. The education affair enlisted men of sincere convictions upon either side. Holding these convictions it is difficult to see how they could have acted otherwise. But, from the point of view of those without, the exhibition was lamentable, and, from the point of view of the Church as a whole, it was disastrous. The contribution which religion made to the great educational problems of the day was a factional fierceness which was successfully exploited for their own purposes by the political parties. That was horrible. Or look at the great positive purposes of the Church's existence. The primary work of the Church is the evangelisation of the world, but the greatest drag upon evangelisation is the disunion of Christians. For the rival sects and bodies seem by their divisions only to hide the figure of the Master which they claim to present. Can any Christian man or woman really sit down satisfied in the knowledge that the first task given by the Lord to His people is weakened in its effort and long delayed in its accomplishment, because of disunion?

Again, it is the great function of the Church to witness to Christ in the world. His voice ought to speak through her. But when men listen to her voice, as far as it is uttered corporately, they listen to Babel. Can a Christian man seriously tolerate the silencing, even though it is only in part, of that Voice which it is man's eternal welfare to hear? The damage that is done is not damage merely to the particular Church. The sect as a sect may even flourish by disunion; for there is a success in sectarianism as well as a failure.

The damage is done to the plan of Jesus Christ our Lord in so far as we are able to trace that plan in the New Testament.

Finally the clog to our Christian birthright of communion is disunion. To acquiesce in something less than Christ meant for His Church is to obstruct our communion with Him. And more. It is not merely to obstruct, it is almost to destroy that intercommunion which ought to be such a joy and strength to the corporate side of our Church life. Thank God, that just as it is possible to have a unity of individual preaching and witness, so it is possible to have individual communion and fellowship. But the terrible results of the loss of corporate communion and fellowship it is hard to over-estimate. When we meet in conference, we attain a high spiritual moment in our life. We realise the blessed brotherhood that there is in spite of everything. But that should make us not only the more wishful, but the more determined that the 'one Bread' and 'one Body' which ought to be the mark of all the followers of Christ, shall become an accomplished fact for us all. In days gone by it doubtless was right and wise, for the sake of true religion, that England should break with Rome or Wesleyanism with the Church of England. Great truths were being obscured and had to be vindicated. Those who believe in the government of the Holy Ghost must, it seems to me, believe that something of that sort was necessary. But may there not be a better thing in store for this age by the path of reunion? And how can we know till we have tried?

And to refuse to try seems perilously akin to a denial

of the Holy Ghost. To be satisfied with a condition clean contrary to the Saviour's prayer, and miserably weakening to ourselves, seems at once a sin and a folly. Our Sovereign Commander has given us the master-words of the work we have to do: they are evangelisation, witness, communion.

As we hear them, and think how we fail Him and His purposes by our divisions, ought not our hearts to burn within us, as He talks with us by the way?

DEMOCRACY AND CHURCH UNITY

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DEMOCRACY AND CHURCH UNITY

The development of a great society or institution is always a fascinating study; the inquiry into the dominating ideas which brought it into existence, the forms in which those ideas found their first expression, the modifications which both ideas and forms have undergone in the course of centuries, under the influence of physical surroundings, of national character, of historical developments and of rival institutions, always arouse keen interest, and often keener controversy; and the sharpness of the controversy and the strength of the interest are measures of the hold which the institution itself has on the affections and thoughts of the age which sets the inquiry on foot.

The Christian Church, Divine Society as we believe her to be, is no exception to the rule of historical development: the scholastic and deductive method, assuming certain premises, drawing from them by syllogistic reasoning definite conclusions, and then trying to square the facts with those conclusions, has broken down utterly in her case as in others; and the disintegration of the organised Christian Society produced by the Reformation is the measure of its failure.

We are learning to study her historically. Believing that she exists to influence the world, we recognise that the world, the whole sum of her environment, has profoundly influenced her ; physical features have moulded her growth ; in Great Britain, most of the prominent ecclesiastical centres are "foci behind a number of little landing-places"[1] ; Canterbury, Winchester, St. Andrews, Glasgow, St. David's, all answer to this description. National characteristics have played their part. Latin Christianity with its emphasis on the institution is a different thing from Teutonic Christianity with its emphasis on the individual. The varying stages of political development found by the Church as she came in contact with fresh races have left their traces upon her institutions ; the city dioceses of Italy differ widely from the territorial dioceses of Northern Europe ; and these again from the loose tribal jurisdiction of the Celtic bishop, often the "tame" dependant of the religious community founded by the saint who had evangelised the tribe.

Equally have the subsequent political and social developments of the nations which she has won exercised a marked influence, for good and ill, upon her growth. It is a commonplace of New Testament exegesis that St. Paul's vision of the Christian Church in the letter which we commonly speak of as "to the Ephesians" was, in part at least, suggested and inspired by the impression produced on his mind by the great Empire from the capital of which he was writing. It is reasonable to ask whether the idea of

[1] H. J. Fleure, *Human Geography in Western Europe*, p. 91.

a world-wide Church would have arisen so early in the development of Christianity had it not been for the existence of an empire which to the men of the time was practically world-wide (*ἡ οἰκουμένη*).

But the Roman Empire was not merely a world-wide dominion ; it was a dominion with one head, an empire ; and when the centre of civil power shifted eastward, and "New Rome" on the Bosphorus supplanted old Rome on the Tiber, the city of the Seven Hills took her revenge. Neither Byzantine Autocrator nor Holy Roman Emperor was the true inheritor of the substance of Augustus's sway ; the Bishop of Rome soon became something more than *primus inter pares,* and exercised, and exercises, a jurisdiction beyond the wildest ambitions of the greatest of the emperors. Kaiser or Tsar might bear Cæsar's name ; the successor of Peter wields his power.

But the sway of the Western Church included regions and peoples which had never been brought within the bounds of the Empire. The irruption of the barbarians into the south and west of Europe, the extension of Christianity into the north and east, left the clergy the only representatives of the old civilisation : as our word "clerk" witnesses, they were the only educated people; and it was not their spiritual claims alone which gave them the great power which they undoubtedly exercised. This power was a formidable obstacle to the establishment of a strong civil government ; and the method adopted by the statesmen of the Middle Ages to curb the power of the clergy was to bring them, as far as their possessions were concerned, under the feudal system. The feudal character

of the great ecclesiastics in Northern Europe was due in origin, not to a desire to exalt their position, but to the attempt to limit their influence in the interests of good government; still, feudal lords they became, and as circumstances altered, that which had been devised as a limitation of their influence issued in the increase of their power and position.

The break-up of the feudal system meant in the first instance a great growth in the power of the monarchy; and this was closely followed in those countries in which the Reformation established itself by a complete breach with Rome. The civil power found itself heir to the control which the Pope had exercised over the Church; and in reformed Christendom the Church became more subservient to the State than probably at any period of her history. Not in our own country alone was this position used by the State frankly for its own ends, with a cynical indifference to the interests of the Church, which became little more than a moral policeman with a deplorably low standard; the idea that she could have a law other than that of the State was quite ignored. There can be no question that this loss of independence on the part of the historic Church of our own country was one cause of the splitting off of other Christian bodies who were determined that the spiritual Body of Christ should have other representation than that offered by a complacent Erastianism. But even the Free Churches into which these communities have grown bear traces of the influence of later political and social theories of an exaggeratedly individualistic character, which are now largely discredited, but were

widely accepted at the period of their most vigorous development.

Now the Christian Church was in its first stages largely democratic. As Principal Sir George Adam Smith has pointed out in an illuminating chapter on "The Multitude" in his *Jerusalem,* Judaism, alike from its Semitic ancestry and from the character of its religion, gave great weight to the voice of the people: "the *Congregation* or *Assembly* remained a Jewish institution to the end."[1] Neither Herod nor the high priests could frame their policy without deference to the opinion of the many: "they feared the people" is a phrase familiar enough in the Gospels, and an examination of the position of "the multitude" (*τὸ πλῆθος*) in the mother Church at Jerusalem, as recorded in the Acts, will show how true Hebrew Christianity was to its national traditions in this respect. When the Gospel passed out into the Hellenic world, it found an environment saturated with democratic ideas. It is not without significance that the word used in the earliest account of the organisation of the Gentile churches (Acts xiv, 23), for the choice of elders (*χειροτονεῖν*), is one which in origin at least connotes popular election, even though by this time it had, without losing in every case its primary meaning, a secondary sense of "appointment." The Church of Corinth, as revealed alike in St. Paul's letters and in that of Clement, was essentially democratic in constitution and procedure; and in theory at least the consent of the people has been a

[1] Sir G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem,* i, p. 440.

necessary preliminary of ordination to the ministry in all ages of the Church.

But the stages through which the Church passed, the influence of her political surroundings, and the pressure of human ambition within her pale, all combined to rob her democratic principles of any real influence upon her life. Practically the control of her members over her policy and actions vanished, and in our own country another contributing cause to the divisions of English Christianity was the desire for an organisation which should approach more closely to the primitive model, in the share taken by all its members in the government and ordering of the Christian Society. It was felt that "what may be called the ecclesiastical disfranchisement of the people, was a radical departure from the mind of Christ, and the practice of the primitive Church." It was the aim of the pioneers of separation, the Independents, to restore "to its central place the idea of the Church as essentially a redeemed people, who in virtue of a common direct relation to Christ are spiritually equal among themselves, and endowed by Him with all the rights and powers which He meant His Church to possess."[1]

There has been yet another cause, due largely to historical conditions, which has made for the divisions of English-speaking Christianity—class distinction. The Reformation in England was mainly from above downwards; it was not primarily a great popular movement as in Scotland, and so the oligarchical

[1] *Evangelical Christianity*, p. 87. Essay by F. J. Powicke, "The Congregational Churches."

tendencies of the Medieval Church received no check, but rather encouragement, in Church life. Gradually those classes of society who found little scope for their energies in the national Church and its organisation drifted off into other communities; the religious divisions of our country correspond fairly closely with social lines of cleavage. Sir Charles Booth's exhaustive study of the religious influences in the life and labour of the people in London bears clear and unbiased testimony to this fact. "With the rich and fashionable the Established Church up to a certain point has an easy task"; in parishes "occupied by a regular wage-earning class, it must be admitted that all branches of the Church of England fail alike"; "districts inhabited entirely by the middle classes . . . are not unsatisfactory for the Church." "The Congregationalist Church is more than any other the Church of the middle classes." The Baptists "on the whole, touch a lower grade than the Congregationalists." The Wesleyan "congregations are drawn from the same classes that support the Baptists and Congregationalists." "The Primitive Methodists reach the working people . . . are the only ones amongst us who touch the poor at all."[1] The above makes unpleasant reading, but expresses undoubted facts.

We have sketched very briefly the political and social influences which have affected the Church; we have seen that everywhere these influences have gone far to rob the historic Church of any effective action upon the democratic principles of the primitive

[1] Sir Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People*, "Religious Influences," *VII*, pp. 44, 47, 112, 123, 132, 139.

model; and we have found in our own country that the loss of this democratic element has directly or indirectly operated in the direction of division, and that in three ways. It has rendered the national Church subservient to the State, provoking men to seek a truer expression of the spiritual independence of the Christian Society; it has robbed the laity of their proper voice in the ordering of the Church, driving them to find scope for their activities in communities in which such opportunities are given; it has gone far to turn the historic community into a "class" Church, encouraging by natural reaction the establishment of other "class" Churches, for the spiritual satisfaction of those who felt themselves deprived of their due share in the control of the National Church.

But while it is true that the environment of the Christian Society has, both in pre-Reformation times and subsequently, done much to render inoperative her democratic principles in her own life, those principles have reacted on the political and social life of the world. We speak of the democracies of the ancient world, too often forgetful of the fact that the institution of slavery left anything from two-thirds to four-fifths of the total population expressly without any political rights whatsoever; but the institution of slavery, which seemed to the Greek political philosopher part of the order of nature, slowly yielded to the solvent of Christian principles.

The rise of modern democratic movements may be said to follow closely on the Reformation; and Sir G. A. Smith directs attention to the interesting and at

first sight startling fact that the champions of liberty drew their arguments mainly from the Old Testament; while those who maintained the divine right of kings relied mostly upon certain passages in the New. His epigrammatic explanation that "the Apostles were sojourners and pilgrims; the Prophets were citizens and patriots,"[1] probably comes near enough to the truth. If he is right in quoting with approval F. D. Maurice's words that we must hold "paramount the duty of vindicating the Old Testament, as the great witness for liberty," we cannot forget that it is Christianity which has given the Jewish Scriptures their authority in the eyes of the world, though at certain stages of her development, as Marcionism shows, she was under great temptation to abandon them.

But if democracy owes much to the Christian Church for her preservation of the Old Testament in honour and respect, with its emphasis upon national responsibility and national rights, it also owes a debt to directly Christian teaching. Advocates of the divine right could quote isolated passages of the New Testament in favour of their theory: but while the inspiring principle of all true democracy, the value of each individual man by reason of his manhood, might be claimed as a contribution of Stoicism to thought, it received an immense impetus as a factor in everyday life from the Christian belief that the Son of God had died for all men and for each. St. Paul's use of the phrase "the brother for whom Christ died" as a rebuke to intellectual contempt, is well known;

[1] Sir G. A. Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 264.

less known is its use in our own history to rebuke social contempt. In the great agrarian revolt of 1548 in East Anglia, the royal messenger spoke contemptuously of the rebels as "villeins"; the answer of Robert Kett, their leader, was, "Call no man villein, who was redeemed by the precious blood-shedding of Jesus Christ."[1] And this principle has always had a prominent position in the teaching of the Church. The "other-worldliness" itself, with which modern democracy is rather ready to taunt religion, played no small part in giving value to the individual, alike in his own eyes and in the eyes of his fellow believers. The belief that he "could read his title clear, to mansions in the skies" might make a man ready to submit to conditions of life here which would otherwise have been intolerable; but it gave him a sense of worth and dignity which lifted him above their influence, and kept him master of his own soul.

There is yet one more service which the Church rendered indirectly to the cause of popular government. An uneducated democracy is almost a contradiction in terms; it would probably be true to say that democracy, as a political ideal, has only emerged in communities which have reached a certain standard of education. But the services rendered by religion to the cause of learning are often forgotten. It is not merely that the old educational foundations, both schools and universities, were religious in character; it is not merely that the Church in the Middle Ages supplied the one "educational ladder" by which

[1] Quoted by T. R. Glover, *Christian Tradition and its Verification* p. 156.

intellectual ability might come to its own; it is not merely that, when Nonconformity was excluded from the older universities by the Act of Uniformity, it set up those academies in different parts of the country which did so much for the cause of higher education. The main fact for our purpose is that at the beginning of the nineteenth century "very little elementary instruction given in this country was of any value which was not given in schools directly or indirectly connected with religious denominations or societies." [1] No public money was given for educational purposes till 1833; and then the only means of distributing the Parliamentary grant was through the two great educational societies, the National Society in connection with the Established Church, and the British and Foreign School Society, deriving "its chief support from Dissenters." It is not claimed that the provision was in any way adequate to meet the need; but it was the *only* provision for popular education. It scarcely seems too much to say that the religious bodies of the country, by their efforts on behalf of education, made the modern democratic movements in Britain possible.

When we turn to the present day, it must be at once admitted, however regretfully, that organised religion has comparatively little influence upon the democracy of our time. It is not that one body more than another succeeds in touching the great masses of labour, or in influencing labour organisations. All Churches alike confess their failure in this respect.

[1] G. Balfour, *Educational Systems of Great Britain and Ireland*, p. xviii.

Sir Charles Booth's verdict on the position in London has been already quoted; and though this would have to be somewhat modified to be applicable to the industrial districts of the North, it scarcely overstates the case even for that part of the country. Nor again would it be fair to say that the artisan class is as a whole hostile to religion. There is much indifference, a good deal of inchoate belief, and an almost complete detachment from any Christian society. There are, of course, notable exceptions : a considerable proportion of the leaders of organised labour are men of definite religious convictions, and not infrequently members of some religious body; but when all has been said, the fact remains that the Churches do not exercise the same influence upon the artisan and labouring classes that they do upon other sections of the community, and that organised labour is on the whole alienated from organised religion.

The grounds for this estrangement have been discussed again and again, and we are not concerned with them, save in so far as they bear upon the question of reunion; but it will not be difficult to show that many of the causes of alienation are more or less the result of "our unhappy divisions."

We may put out of court at once any feeling arising from the supposed "other-worldliness" of Christian teaching; partly as being valid mainly against a past phase of that teaching, partly because it has no relation to our present subject. But with the next most common objection to organised Christianity, that of its supposed social partisanship, the case is somewhat different. It is

probably the most widely-spread cause of estrangement. "Our forefathers built that church," said an artisan to the present writer, pointing to one of the magnificent fifteenth century churches of East Anglia; "I would not put one stone upon another for it to-day." "Why not?" was the natural reply. "Because you have not held the balance even." The charge was made against the Established Church, and it would be idle to deny that in that case there has been abundant ground for the accusation. The alliance between squire and parson in the country districts, the part played by clerical magistrates in days gone by in the repression of labour troubles, the strength of her vested interests which have made her slow to take up the reform of abuses—these and many other facts might be alleged in ample justification of this feeling. But the Free Churches are scarcely less involved. They have been the religious home of the self-made man, who has either remained true to the communion in which he was brought up, or has been repelled by the social exclusiveness of members of the national Church. Nonconformity therefore is largely identified in the eyes of the wage-earner with the employing class, and is supposed to be involved in its interests. But the class feeling which has existed and unfortunately still exists between the Established and the Free Churches, and in some degree between the Free Churches themselves (get a Wesleyan's candid opinion of the Primitive Methodists or *vice versa*) brings us back to the fact which has already been commented on, that the divisions of English Christendom largely follow the lines of social cleavage. The Church, in

the wider sense, has not been the common meeting ground of all classes, the crucible in which the different elements of national life have been melted together into unity. Her own divisions, based at least upon non-social grounds, have hindered her from that, one of her proper functions; from her that hath not, hath been taken away even that which she seemeth to have; her loss of unity has destroyed her unifying influence, and all her divisions have come under suspicion, and more than suspicion, of class alliance.

More serious than the above, though less commonly expressed, is the feeling that in certain essential moral requisites organised religion is actually inferior to the so-called secular movements of the day. The sense of fellowship, with its practical consequences of ready service, and cheerful surrender for others, is a marked characteristic of the actual life of the working-man and his mates; the readiness of the poor to help one another is a standing astonishment and rebuke to those who know them best; and the charity of judgment which they exercise one towards another sometimes stands in the way of what would seem to be the just treatment of offences against social order. It is easy to criticise the latter as proceeding from a low standard of conduct, and a lack of power to take long views, or carry out their consequences; but the Christian qualities of refusal to judge, of mutual service and helpfulness, and of effective fellowship, receive more practical expression in the lives of the working classes than amongst many of those who make a distinct profession of religion, and are attached to its organised societies. But the greatest failure in fellowship on the part of

Christianity in our country is not in the lives of its individual professors, serious as that may be, but in the rivalry and divisions between the different Churches. To ourselves historical or doctrinal reasons may account for and excuse the state of affairs; but to the outsider, who is only interested in things as they are, the failure of fellowship, as seen in a divided Christendom, goes far to rob the Church of any rightful claim to moral leadership.

And, rightly or wrongly, this condition of division is traced by the more thoughtful critics of the Churches to an underlying moral defect, the lack of humility, and the spirit of pride, particularly in the ministry of the Churches. "Organised religion is all swank, and when I get home I will have no more to do with it," was the vigorous assertion of a gunner sergeant, an ex-church-worker, as he lay wounded in hospital in France, to the chaplain; and the charge is one which has been repeated in many forms. Here again the point is, not what defence we can make to our own satisfaction, but what impression Church life produces on the spectator. Humility is unquestionably a Christian virtue. We contrast the *μεγαλοψυχία* (sense of superiority) of Aristotle's Ethics with the 'humility and meekness' of St. Paul's Epistles. But if the attitude of the Churches, and especially of their official representatives one to another, reminds the looker-on of the pagan philosopher rather than of the Christian Apostle, they have in this respect also fallen short of their ideal, and weakened their claim to moral leadership.

Yet one more charge is brought against the Churches, rather on practical than on moral grounds, the ineffectiveness of their opinion on great public questions.

"The Church is, I suppose, the largest voluntary organisation in the country," said a Labour representative to a prominent Churchman not long ago, "but as far as I can see it does not *count* for as much as a rather small trade union." It may be objected that efficiency is one of the fetishes of the present day, one of the idols from the worship of which the Church must keep herself free; but are we prepared to argue that ineffectiveness is one of the marks *stantis ecclesiae?* Can anyone allege that the mutual jealousy between Established Church and Free Churches, their constant fear lest one should get the advantage of the other, has done nothing to weaken the effectiveness of Christian witness in public affairs? The astonishment, so constantly expressed by the outsider when it is found that representatives of these two main divisions can sit and work together at a common task, without disagreement, is the measure of the impression which their constant bickerings have produced on the mind of the world at large. If that world *expects* Christians to quarrel, and is surprised when they do not, is it any wonder that it feels quite safe in disregarding their opinion and going its own way, unmoved by the principles which they profess to hold and claim to advocate?

Some time has been spent in considering the present failure of the Church adequately to influence the democratic movements of to-day, and in tracing the extent to which her divisions are responsible for that failure. But the emphasis laid on this side of the question must not be interpreted as an admission that the importance of organised Christianity is a thing of the past, and

that the future of national life can be safely worked out without reference to the great principles for which Christianity stands.

Even the vigorous and forcible criticism which has been directed against the Churches by democratic leaders proceeds not so much from hostility to those principles as from a feeling of acute disappointment that the accredited representatives of Christianity have fallen so far short of the principles which they profess that their influence in moral questions is not what it ought to be, and that those who look to the Churches for guidance are disappointed in the response—

"The hungry sheep look up and are not fed."

The very bitterness of their criticism is the measure of their disappointment.

There are certain directions in which democracy obviously and confessedly needs the help of such a body as the Church ought to be. The democratic movements of to-day are necessarily occupied to a large extent with material aims, with such matters as wages, the conditions and control of labour, the distribution of the products of industry: these are problems pressing for immediate settlement, which may not be neglected. But there is a real danger lest the pressure of material difficulties and the obviousness of material problems should materialise the whole movement, a movement which depends for its success upon spiritual resources. "Democracy will be effective in proportion to the intensity of its spiritual and moral faith";[1] it needs the constant reminder that

[1] A. Henderson, M.P., *Aims of Labour*, p. 82.

"man doth not live by bread alone"; and the Christian Church above all other institutions exists to witness to that truth.

Again, the modern democratic movement is primarily concerned with the things of the immediate present. It is not, indeed, without its visions of the future, not without great plans and high hopes of the results of its work; but those visions can only be realised by such immersion in the details of the present that the worker is prone to lose himself in them, and to be cramped and narrowed. Democracy has need of "far horizons": the over-emphasis of the Church on the life beyond, its use of that as an anodyne to dull men's sense of the miseries of the present, instead of spurring them on to seek out and remove their cause, has brought about a reaction in the other direction. "Heaven here and now" has been the somewhat defiant cry of many of its leaders; but it is significant to find so thoroughgoing a reformer as the late Mr. Keir Hardie speaking in the following terms: "A most gratifying change has been coming over the spirit of the whole movement. Great leaders like Jean Jaurès in France, and Vandervelde in Belgium, and others less known in Germany, have been discovering what some of us, who are older-fashioned, have never forgotten—that behind Nature there is a Power, unseen but felt, that beyond death there must be a Something; else were life on earth a mere wastage; and that Idea is permeating the whole movement."[1]

Yet once more the character-building power of Christianity is sorely needed. Labour movements

[1] *Labour and Religion*, by ten Labour Members, p. 50.

develop many fine qualities. Solidarity and the sense of fellowship, individual and corporate self-sacrifice, an impatience of irrational conventions and shams, are all marks of their spirit, and in these respects they put organised religion to shame. But from the very nature of the case, they are more occupied in claiming rights than in asserting duties ; the very insistence on corporate action has a tendency to weaken individual character : there is the weakness of indiscipline in the movement, a lack of loyalty to chosen leaders, a low view of the obligation of contracts. Its best friends could scarcely assert that Labour has included amongst its prominent ideals that of the man " who sweareth to his neighbour and disappointeth him not, though it were to his own hindrance." In these and other respects, democracy needs the discipline of religious training and religious ideals which the Church exists to give ; the movement itself is weakened and hampered by such failings, a fact of which its leaders at any rate are quite conscious ; " the power of democracy as a whole will be measured by the loyalty of the individual to principle, and by his belief in the moral power of right, as against wrong." And they look to the Church to give the needed help : " the Churches should be concerned more with that upon which the stability of democracy depends, than with its dangers. They should seek to permeate it with moral experience, and to give it that stimulus and moral guidance which tend to the development of its ethical character."[1] The recognition of the

[1] " Christianity and the Working Classes," Essay by A. Henderson, M.P., p. 131.

need is quite explicit; will the Church rise to the greatness of her opportunity, and qualify herself by a drastic purging of those faults which at present disqualify her from seizing it?

But there is yet one more direction in which the democratic movements of to-day need that which the Church exists to supply. Let us take a concrete case. It is a commonplace of economic history that the old lines of cleavage were in the main vertical; trade was ranged against trade, and all those of a trade, in whatever position, were united in the interests of that trade. These old vertical divisions have almost disappeared in national life; similar lines of cleavage still exist in international life, in the division of nation from nation; and one of the aspirations of democracy is their removal, by what is usually spoken of as internationalism. This is all to the good; yet democracy will have failed if it only substitutes for these vertical divisions an accentuation of the horizontal lines of cleavage between class and class.

Now democracy is not in any way responsible for the class-structure of Society; and it may be true that "the class-structure of Society necessitates the class-struggle"; it is the aim of the best minds in the movement to do away with this struggle. "The class-struggle is by virtue of its object only a phase. . . . It is a poor theory of Society that regards industrial warfare as permanent; such warfare is presumably directed to the securing of justice, and will cease when justice has been secured."[1] The writer by his qualification "presumably" hints at a certain

[1] G. D. H. Cole, *World of Labour*, pp. 391, 392.

measure of doubt, or rather lack of clearness, in the aims of the movement; to claim to perpetuate class war would be its condemnation. This is a matter on which there must be no confusion or lack of clearness. The sting of class distinctions lies not in the different positions which men may occupy in relation one to another, but in the selfish use which they make of their advantages; that is surely what is meant by the phrase "the securing of justice"—selfishness lies at the root of our troubles. But there is an old and wise exposure of the folly of trying to cast out devils by Beelzebub, prince of the devils. To cure selfishness by selfishness, to combat selfish interests by appeals to self-interest, is to make confusion worse confounded. It is not contended that democracy as a movement is more selfish than those who oppose it; probably it is much less so; yet just because the movement is a human movement, one in which human motives and inspirations have full play, it needs a motive and a stimulus to unselfishness and self-sacrifice outside itself. Alike within the movement itself, and in its impact upon the world, selfishness is the fundamental obstacle to success. "What nearly drove us out of every movement was the fact that we were continually running up against people who very often subordinated the movement they were connected with to their own personal selfishness: . . . no movement is any worth that does not make you subordinate your selfish desires to the good of that movement." The speaker (Mr. G. Lansbury) goes on to say: "I cannot find anywhere, though I have tried, where I can get such strength and help to try at any rate to beat down sin

in oneself as I do in the Bible, and in the teaching of our Lord, and in what we call the Christian religion." Christ "stood for love all the time."[1]

Now the very existence of the Church, be she faithful or unfaithful, is a standing testimony to Christ's claim that unselfishness is the true basis of human life; and her failures are the witness to the strength of the opposition with which that claim meets. She will never find any better expression of the true secret of influence than Chaucer's verdict on the poor parson:

> "But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
> He taughte, but first he folwede it himselve;"

and her testimony will carry weight in proportion as she lives by that principle; but of the truth to proclaim which she exists, democracy is in as sore need as any other human movement, its followers, as any other men.

In these ways democracy has need of the Church's help, and that need has been frankly acknowledged by many of her leaders. But the Church which is to win the respect of the people must present a very different appearance from that of organised religion amongst us at the present time. "Is Christianity, as we have it represented to-day, split up as it is into almost innumerable denominational churches, capable of dealing adequately with the growing forces of reaction? . . . However much Christians may console themselves that a Church divided into numerous sects is justified and, as many think, a source of strength, the multitude is slow to believe in a Christianity so divided."[2]

[1] *Labour and Religion*, etc., pp. 73, 74.
[2] *Christianity and the Working Classes*, pp. 125, 126.

It doubtless may be argued with some force that the divisions of English-speaking Christendom have had their place in the Divine "economy"; that by those divisions different sides of Church life, different aspects of Christian teaching, have been developed and emphasised as they would not have been in a united society. The Church of England may be said to have stood for continuity of life and development, the Free Churches for variety of type and boldness of experiment, the former mainly for the institutional and sacramental sides of Christianity, the latter for its experimental and prophetic aspects. The independence and responsibility of the congregation have received emphasis from the Congregationalists, the sanctity of Baptism as the seal of a living faith from the Baptists, the importance of evangelisation from the Wesleyan movement, and, in later days, from the Salvation Army. But is it not possible, in view of the great opportunities which now lie before us, for all these contributions to be brought into the common stock, made the possession of one re-united Church? Sectional Christianity and sectional Churches will never do much more than influence sections of the nation, and some sides of the national life. It will take a whole and a united Church to influence the whole nation and life in all its aspects.

In this essay the limitations imposed by the subject have compelled the treatment of the question of reunion upon lines which may seem to savour of opportunism. The relation of the question to the democratic movements of the day has involved its handling in a manner which might appear to be dictated by

policy rather than by principle: disunion has been regarded more as a source of practical weakness than as a moral offence. But the movement towards unity is based on something truer and nobler than any such selfish or ambitious desire. It is not from eagerness to be appointed "court chaplains to King Demos" that the various Christian Churches are considering how best the things that divide them may no longer be allowed so large a place in their life. The Spirit of God is moving upon the face of the waters, once more to reduce chaos and waste to order and fruitfulness. He is opening men's eyes to see how much the work of the Church is hindered by her divisions and rivalries; He is convincing men of the wrong which those divisions are doing to the Master whom they claim to serve. In obedience to His promptings, Christian men are trying to come together into one, not that they may gain more influence for themselves, but that they may serve the world better by a more effective witness to the truths for which they stand. The One Spirit is re-forming the one Body to be a more efficient instrument for the carrying out of His purposes in the world, is working for the fulfilment of the prayer of the Church's Lord to His Father—"that they may be one, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

REUNION EAST AND WEST

BY THE VEN. H. GRESFORD JONES, M.A.,
Archdeacon of Sheffield

SYNOPSIS

I. Human progress depends upon man's capacity for participating in Unity.

Such Unity is possible through the Spirit of Jesus Christ: and it is to be expressed by His Society, as a Divinely inspired Brotherhood of men throughout the world. This Society is to manifest true Unity not only in spirit but also in polity.

II. How and where shall such a polity be found?

The importance of a careful survey of "East and West." By the terms "East and West" we mean nothing less than œcumenical unity: *i.e.*, a structural unity, embracing all the severed members of the Body of Christ.

As an interim stage, however, unity within Anglo-Saxon Christendom is to be desired; and herein we note thankfully:

(1) The lead of the Anglican Episcopate in successive Lambeth Conferences.

(2) The strong pressure of both Anglican and Free Church opinion.

(3) Most of all, the practical developments already arising out of Missionary propaganda, *e.g.*:

(*a*) Edinburgh Conference, 1910. Report of Commission VIII.

(*b*) Kikuyu Pronouncement, 1915.

(*c*) Projected Conference on Faith and Order, resulting already on the English side in:

1. First Interim Report, 1916.
2. Second Interim Report, 1918.

Far-reaching possibilities suggested by the foregoing in the direction of a Polity acceptable to all.

III. But such a Polity is only possible in proportion as the Evangelistic spirit breathes within.

The goal of unity is not temporal, but eternal. It is in the transcendent significance of what Christ is to man for all eternity that we find our supreme unifying force.

REUNION EAST AND WEST

"The deepest lesson of the war is not the need for an allied General Staff, or for an international food and shipping strategy, or even for a League of Nations, or for a Parliament of Man or Federation of the World! It is the need for moral and spiritual unity; for a new world within, to match the new world without."[1] So speaks, we believe, whatever is truest in modern thought. The civilised world has learnt the value of unity; for unity, it realises, is not indeed life's goal, but at least its true *modus operandi*. But Unity, like so many other transcendent achievements of man, needs its incentive, its inspiration, its interior fire. And to be effective such inner fire must be Divine. So vast, so complex, so stoutly resisted is this whole conception of Unity, that over all is written, in letters that no observant eyes can fail to acknowledge, *Nisi Dominus frustra!*

To the great pioneer thinker of Christendom it was given, in the Church's early prime, to see these two things clearly: first, that the progress of man hangs at each stage upon his capacity to appropriate this primary requirement of progress, Unity; and secondly,

[1] *Round Table*, September, 1918.

that such Unity is stored up for him, proportionate to all his progressive requirement of it, in Christ. This is the great theme of St. Paul's historic letter from his Roman captivity. "God be praised," he cries,[1] "that He has purposed, in His stewardship of life's supreme moments of opportunity, to gather together all things in one Unity in Christ." God is the Unifier, God is the steward of these supreme unifying movements. He waits only for man to make application to Him for the resources in His hands.

Can any question that just such a moment of opportunity in life's progress is now before us? Can any question that God has adequate resources in the way of Unity ready for our demands? Can any question that what is supremely needed is for a Church unified both East and West, to supply what is required for a unified world; to promote, as the household of the Divine Steward of Unity, that "new world within, to match the new world without"?

What does the Unity of Christ's Church "dispersed throughout the world" involve? What stages towards such reunion may we chronicle with hopefulness to-day?

I

In a recent contribution to *The Times*,[2] the Bishop of Hereford has alleged an antithesis between Evangelical and Political Reunion. While the antithesis is somewhat forced, the Bishop's communication still possesses this advantage, that it does in an epigrammatic way urge upon the public mind the important

[1] Ephesians i, 10. [2] August 17, 1918.

consideration that there are two kinds of reunion before us—call them spiritual and organic, call them, if you like, Evangelical and Political; and that we shall never master even the approaches to this august and complex subject till this distinction is made plain.[1]

We are on sure ground for our advance when we recognise that the first (*i.e.* the Evangelical) is already accessible to us to-day, and that the second (*i.e.* the Political) is the matter that now claims our most generous and active thought. As Dr. Eugene Stock observed at the closing session of the Edinburgh Conference in 1910, "Unity"—and as he swept his arm over that large Christian assembly, drawn from so many nations and so many tongues, the gesture was significant—"Unity," he said,[2] "we have got already. Uniformity we do not want at all; but there are two other things. There is Intercommunion, which many look forward to as the goal to be aimed at. But there is a fourth thing. That is Union, and that is the only thing we should aim at." That is the answer to the Bishop and to those who, like him, emphasise the purely spiritual side. There is nothing seriously to hinder the fullest "spiritual" or "evangelical" unity at this moment. The far-reaching issues of the Keswick Convention have proved for more than a generation how potent evangelical unity has already become. The united services in more than one of

[1] Dr. Vernon Bartlet, in an illuminating article on Reunion in the *Contemporary Review* (October, 1918), speaks of "the will to unity," and "the historic sense"; phrases which express these two distinct approaches to Reunion with singular felicity.

[2] *Co-operation and Unity*, p. 215, World Missionary Conference, vol. viii.

our cathedrals this very year (1918) show how cordial is the desire for it to increase. There is, however, at present much to hinder that organic or political reunion without which the spiritual or evangelical is incapable of proper expression. The bones of the broken human body, so Sir Robert Jones tells us in his "Romance of Surgery,"[1] show a marvellous readiness to adapt themselves to the work of reconstruction; bone apparently vital with life to come "bone to his bone"; but it needs all the art of bone-graft surgery to make the severed bones organically operative for the structural wholeness of the body. So with the Body of Christ. There is, thank God, the new agglutinativeness in the severed members; but there must be the most laborious care, on the part of those duly qualified, to re-engraft them with all the skill that religious science can produce, in order that the whole body may again be structurally one, and therefore spiritually strong for its mighty tasks.

This, and nothing else than this, is that phase of reunion to which we are now called, and to which we devote ourselves with such hope. In what fields, I ask, may inquiry be made? How may a polity of reunion, a structure of unity, best be brought about? By what stages may the varied groups of Christendom be gathered into one organic whole?

[1] *Réveille*, August, 1918.

II

The subject of Reunion, as earlier essays in this volume show, may be studied in many aspects and in many fields. Reunion, to be worthy of the name, must be as comprehensive as Christendom itself. Prior to the war Archbishop Platon, the Russian Archbishop of North America, had contributed to the *Constructive Quarterly*[1] his memorable article entitled "Admitting all Impossibilities, nevertheless Unity is Possible." If such an article could be written in 1913, how much more now? The noble appeal of the Primate of Sweden for an international Christian meeting has elicited responses from some of the most important branches of the Eastern Church, showing a craving for œcumenical unity that would have been surprising five years ago. There are more "Comrades of the Great War" than we dream of. Unity is no longer a counsel of perfection, but a coveted necessity. Even as regards the Latin section of the Church Catholic, in spite of much to discourage us of late, there are not wanting signs, faint yet perceptible, of a coming change of heart. "Reunion East and West" is meaningless unless the Latin and the Greek, the Syrian and the Copt, shall sit down at the Table of God. "Admitting all impossibilities," we accept the Russian Archbishop's challenge, "nevertheless unity is possible."

Still, for the moment, one preparatory coalition, one preliminary unity, is required. Penetrating into every

[1] September, 1913.

nook and corner of the universe, interwoven with the sentiment of almost every race and tribe in the world, is some representation, East and West, of Anglo-Saxon Christianity. Before all else, Anglo-Saxon Christendom must be *one.* And the promise of this moment, so full of hope for mankind, is that within the many groups of Christians speaking the English mother tongue, desire for reunion is passionate and pressure for reunion deeply felt.

This pressure is being felt to-day on three sides. There is first and foremost the strong lead given by the Bishops of the Church of England. There are no documents so lofty or so constructive as the Reports of the Lambeth Conferences of 1888, 1897, and 1908. It was the Bishops who in 1888 pleaded for "readiness to enter into brotherly conference" with the representatives of other Christian communions in the English-speaking races. It was again the Anglican Episcopate who in 1897 pressed that we should ourselves "originate" such conferences; and who later in 1908 proceeded to outline in general terms a scheme of ecclesiastical structure, by which certain of the Presbyterian bodies might come not merely into co-operation or federation but into corporate reunion with the Catholic Church. "We must set before us," they declared," the Church of Christ as He would have it, one spirit and one body, enriched with all those elements of Divine truth which the separated communities of Christians now emphasise severally; strengthened by the interaction of all the gifts and graces which our divisions now hold asunder; filled with all the fulness of God . . . We must fix our eyes

on the Church of the future, which is to be adorned with all the precious things, both theirs and ours. We must constantly desire, not compromise but comprehension, not uniformity but unity."

The second line of pressure, immensely increased by the war itself, comes from what we may call the rank and file of Christendom. It would not be too much to say that reunion is the one religious idea that appeals strongly to-day to the average man. And the joint conferences now widely held throughout the country denote sufficiently the strong sympathy both of clergy and ministers.

But unquestionably for many years past it has been in what we term the mission field, upon the fighting front of the Church in East and West, that the reunion movement has led the way. And just because so often, in religion as in science, our sanest conclusions are drawn from the observations of experiments in the earlier stages of life, no study of reunion on its more practical side will be more remunerative than that which is afforded us in the great field of missionary advance.

To pursue anything like a scientific survey of the reunion movement as witnessed in East and West, we should be obliged, it may be said, to issue an inquiry to every missionary society, and through the society to its agents, first as to what was already in operation, and secondly as to what was felt to be required to meet the immediate needs of the Church throughout the world. Fortunately for our purpose, such an investigation was actually carried out by way of preparation for the World's Missionary Conference of

1910, and presented at Edinburgh by the Commission on Unity, in the eighth volume of the Report. This commission included such recognised authorities as Sir Andrew Fraser, Mr. Silas McBee, Bishop Bashford, the Rev. W. H. Findlay, the Rev. W. H. Frere, D.D., the Bishop of Southwark (Dr. Talbot), and the Dean of Westminster (Dr. Armitage Robinson); and alike from the completeness of its investigations and the learning and insight of the Report, it must remain one of the greatest contributions to the service of reunion.

Out of a wealth of evidence from every quarter, five successive stages towards complete and ultimate reunion are carefully defined: 1. Comity. 2. Conference. 3. Co-operation. 4. Federation. 5. Unity. First, *Comity*, as regards areas of administration. Comity is that initial courtesy upon which all true unity must rest, whether domestic, political, or religious; it is the courtesy which refuses to take another's prerogative; it is the gallantry which declines to build on another's foundation. And by such comity the Church Missionary Society will *e.g.* occupy Uganda, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel North China, the Presbyterians the Zambesi, the Friends Madagascar, the American Methodist Episcopal Society certain parts of China, and so on.

Secondly, by a quite natural sequence, comes *Conference*; by which possible projects for joint economy or combined advance may be mutually weighed. Conferences between missionary agents are obviously matters of regular occurrence all over the world. Third of the unifying movements is that of

Co-operation. Co-operative action is already to be seen in Medical Colleges, Educational Associations, the production of Christian literature, and the establishment of mission presses. Thus far no question of Polity is raised. Comity, Conference, Co-operation, do not involve any consideration of ecclesiastical polity. They connote the obvious inter-relationship of common Christian courtesy, and as such are in frequent practice by the ready concurrence of East and West.

It is when we pass to the fourth and fifth stages that delicate questions of a technical kind have at once to be faced. Federation in the Edinburgh Report, *i.e.* prior to 1910, finds expression only within clearly defined ecclesiastical groups: within the Episcopal circle, as between Missions of C.M.S. and S.P.G. and those of the American Protestant Episcopal body; or as between various Presbyterian and Methodist Missions. The *locus classicus* in the examination of Federation is the pronouncement of the Archbishop of Canterbury entitled "Kikuyu," Easter, 1915. This pronouncement was the outcome of the reference made to the Archbishop by the three Bishops of Mombasa, Zanzibar, and Uganda, with regard to the scheme of Federation (as distinct from reunion) for the benefit of the Christian Church in East Africa. While much of the scheme presents no question of controversy, three items of special difficulty arise: (1) the admission to our pulpits of men who have not been episcopally ordained; (2) the admission to Holy Communion of Christians who have not been episcopally confirmed; and (3) the sanction given directly or by

implication to members of our Church to receive the Holy Communion at the hands of ministers not episcopally ordained. Speaking broadly, both the pronouncement and the answer of the Central Consultative Body of Bishops, upon which it was based, concur in sanctioning, under due episcopal permission, the first two points, and in negativing the third; and the aggregate gains accruing from such sanction are enormous. Precedents in the history of the Church for such reconciliation—*i.e.* between loyalty to denominational systems and desire for a genuinely Native Church—there are none. A precedent is therefore originated. With the simple courage and common sense of the primitive Church, our Fathers in God thankfully recognise the elemental reality that "He hath given to them the Holy Ghost even as unto us, and hath set no difference between us"; that all advance in Christendom rests upon the acceptance of baptism pure and simple as the basis for such advance; that the preaching ministry of non-episcopal Christian communities is, when duly attested and approved, a true ministry. They leave it equally clear that as a preliminary to intercommunion an "ordered" ministry (*i.e.* ordered as well as qualified) is deemed requisite; and by such "order" is meant that order inherent down the ages in what is involved in the Historic Episcopate.

It is this Kikuyu scheme of Federation (now bearing the imprimatur of the whole Anglican Church) that thus opens doors, otherwise sealed since 1662, for the final stage of organic or political reunion.

Although Unity was accepted at Edinburgh in

1910 as the undoubted goal, it was, so far as any scientific diagnosis might go, left severely alone by the World Missionary Conference. The great achievement of Edinburgh was to create a temper that could never again be lost. The Edinburgh Conference tacitly yet emphatically revealed the colossal absurdity of non-union. "Unity of the Spirit," as Dr. Eugene Stock said, we had got. But the Conference did far more. Again and again, in session after session, came the note of eager demand from East and West, not for the imposition in each locality of the weird denominational legacies of the English Reformation, but for the witness of a single and undivided Native Church. Hence, ultimately, in 1915, "Kikuyu." Hence, more immediately, the decision, based on profound and, I think, unanimous conviction, boldly to project yet another world's Evangelistic Conference, not this time to evade but of set purpose to explore those twin deepest realities of Faith and Order which, partially considered, account for so much of the bitterness, yet when fully investigated are responsible for the warmest of all unions between Christian people. No date is as yet arranged for such a Conference; what is agreed is that such a Conference is to be held. And in order to secure to such a Conference the one issue that under God is hoped for, Œcumenical Unity itself, no step is to be omitted, no effort to be shirked, in order to mature so supreme a consummation.

The First Interim Report, February, 1916, and the Second Interim Report, March, 1918, together with their signatories, are a revelation to British Christendom how far and how happily things have already progressed.

"A movement has been initiated in America," so runs the preamble to each Report, "by the Protestant Episcopal Church, which has been widely taken up by the Christian Churches in the United States, to prepare for a world-wide conference on Faith and Order, with a view of promoting the Visible Unity of the Body of Christ on earth. In response to an appeal from those who are co-operating in America, a committee was appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and commissions by the Free Churches, to promote the same movement in England."

The first of these two Reports is concerned with what has been termed the "Evangelical" basis of unity. It consists, as we should expect, of the three initial statements (1) of agreement in matters of faith; (2) of agreement on matters relating to order; (3) of differences in relation to matters of order, which require further study and discussion.

The statement on "matters of faith" is quite admirable. In six articles confession is made of belief in the revelation of God through Jesus Christ; in this revelation, accepted as the Word of God, as the basis of the Church's life; in the two Testaments as containing this Word of God, and the doctrinal sequence that coheres and follows from it; in the two Creeds as presenting a necessary synthesis of this doctrine; and in the miracles recited therein as being in accordance with the principles of Nature critically examined.

In the statement on Order, thankfulness to the Head of the Church is expressed for a common conviction (1) as to the Divine purpose for one visible

Society of believers; (2) as to the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as "effective channels of His grace and as expressions themselves of such visible unity"; (3) as to a ministry of manifold gifts and functions, to maintain the unity and continuity of its witness and work.

The outstanding differences with which this first Report closes are (1) as to the degree of variety permissible in polity, creed and worship; (2) as to the condition on which the validity of the Sacraments depends; (3) as regards the ministry, whether it derives its authority through an Episcopal or a Presbyteral succession, or through the community of believers, or by a combination of both.

It is when we take up the second of the two Reports (March, 1918) that we see how amazingly the whole conception of reunion has developed during these two last years. From "evangelical" we have passed to "political" considerations; but the polity foreshadowed is everywhere enriched by the temper of the evangel in which it is regarded.

The Committee begin by reaffirming their twofold conviction as to the Divine purpose for one visible Society of believers, and for the expression of such unity in full intercommunion. In considering conditions by which such intercommunion may be rendered practicable, they acknowledge (1) that whatever the origin of Episcopacy, Episcopacy in the greater part of Christendom is so much the recognised organ of unity that the Episcopal Churches "ought not to be expected to abandon it"; (2) that non-episcopal Churches have been proved in experience to be

vehicles of Divine Grace. It is imperative therefore that the episcopal and the non-episcopal commissions shall approach one another, not by way of compromise, but by way of common enrichment. The Committee accordingly present three findings of supreme importance: (1) that continuity with the Historic Episcopate should be effectively preserved: (2) that such Episcopate, whether as regards election, or government, should re-assume a constitutional form: (3) that acceptance of the fact of episcopacy, and not any theory as to its character, should be all that is asked for. Such acceptance must not involve any Christian community in "disowning its past." Each must bring into the common life "its own distinctive contribution," and so may the Church hope to appeal to men as Christ's visible organ and instrument in the world.

Such then, so far as documentary history is concerned, is the development, up to the present, of the reunion movement East and West, in so far as we are concerned with our own Anglo-Saxon ministrations in the name of Christianity throughout the world. How far will it lead us? To what extent may we cherish hopes of widespread and lasting achievement?

Clericus Anglicanus stupor mundi. If we hesitate to arrogate to ourselves the old adage as regards our past, let it at least incite us when we look to the future. Let us at least be apprehended by the grandeur of what but an average measure of common sense and of self-repression on our part may procure for distressed humanity. Let us determine that for the healing of the nations the wholesome leaves of an

actual unity may in our lifetime and by our effort make their shoots to appear.

It cannot be too much to hope that if a practical polity for the bringing together of the Church of England and the larger bodies among the Free Churches can here and now receive endorsement from the Bishops of Winchester and Oxford, and from leaders equally revered among the Methodists, the Congregationalists, and the Baptists, similar proposals will be found acceptable in America, and will ultimately be confirmed at the World Conference on Faith and Order when it meets.

It cannot be unreasonable to presume that just as interim reports have been tabled, just as interim pronouncements have been made upon specific efforts at *rapprochement* abroad, so interim action can be taken at home.

Reunion might first be made with that compact and centrally organised body, the last to separate, the last that need have separated, from the National Church, the Wesleyan Methodists. It is they who in their system already combine both episcopal and presbyteral schemes of government. Let them boldly claim the honour of out of the twain making one. Let a fixed year be named for the episcopal ordination of their ordinands; let their Bishops share their responsibilities with ours; let their Communion Office and ours be made one; and intercommunion would once again reign between us, and great would be the gain.

Then, following from such a precedent, other societies might in due season coalesce on such lines as their

councils might approve, and when the moment seemed ripe. And in due time, in all the vast range of American and British Missions, the old barriers would be laid low and a new wealth of spiritual and administrative power would accrue; until, in ultimate complete intercommunion, the Spirit of God coming in would find freedom for those mighty works of peace and good will, of righteousness and salvation, for which mankind is waiting.

III

It is only when we frame to ourselves this ultimate completeness to which reunion may lead, that we can see (even if from afar) the magnitude of that which is now offered to our lifetime and generation. Man's necessity has more than once in human history proved God's opportunity. The Dane with all his frightfulness proved "the real though involuntary creator of a United England."[1] "Modern History begins under stress of the Ottoman Conquests."[2] It may yet be, if we are great enough in heart and in spirit, that out of the present ordeal, at the hands of a similar horror, we may wrench an even greater guerdon, the unification of the modern world. *If we are great enough:* we cannot too anxiously emphasise this essential condition. With all the anguish of the Danish invasion, there had been no united England without a Church in England and leaders in that Church, an Oswald in Bernicia, a Cynegils in Wessex, a Sigebert

[1] Hodgkin, *Polit. Hist. of Eng.*, vol. i, 288.
[2] Acton, *Lectures on Mod. Hist.*, p. 34.

among the West Saxons ; nor, without the new reverence for conscience and the new spirit of reform within the Church, had there been a modern Europe. Even so, in our day and generation, all visions of reconstruction and reconciliation, of co-operation and confederation, are but vain unless behind all these there be this Unifying Spirit of the Most High manifest in an actively loving and united Church.

This then, in the present order of things, is the goal that is set before us. It is the building up on earth of the great human family in the bonds of right. It is the establishment of God's Kingdom, not in name only, but as that structure of human society from which the "middle wall," the dividing barrier of privilege, of caste, of national egotism, shall be done away, and in which His Spirit of association and of good will shall reign. By unity we understand no mere ecclesiastical synthesis : we mean a living spirit breathed into all the relationships of life by men who have found the joy of that spirit as servants of One Living and Unifying Lord. And when we reflect on the one hand upon the wide beneficence down the ages of the various systems of toleration and liberty and confraternity, and on the other upon the appalling retardation of human progress by the restrictions and the cleavages of war, we may well ask what nobler boon could men secure for the world.

And yet there is a greater far. This world is not our resting place. We are here but to leave it and pass on. Here, however surely we may build a *Civitas Dei*, have we no abiding city. We seek one to come. And the goal of Unity is not in itself a

better world, but that which a better world must essentially facilitate, the fulness for each individual of eternal life in Christ. We are to keep, says our greatest human teacher, "the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace . . . till we all attain unto the Unity of the Faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians iv, 13).

So, therefore, unity will only secure its political structure as it finds within itself its true Evangelical fire. In the transcendent significance of what Christ is to us for all eternity we have that which swallows up all lesser differences; and in that transcendent significance we find the deathless constraint so to become united that together we may with greater intensity pass on our life to the remotest and the least likely in all the world, who is still, and always, our Brother, for whom Christ died.

REUNION AND THE WAR

BY THE REV. T. GUY ROGERS, M.C., B.D.,
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SYNOPSIS.

Defence of the value of war experience in the solution of theological problems. The limits of the psychological phenomena. Recent acceleration in the rate of progress towards Reunion.

Analysis of the effect of the war in relation to reunion.

1. *An experience of shame.*

The Church did not count in the world crisis because of its divisions. The consequent impotence of its Head. The disability of the Church in its present condition to offer its services as a mediator.

2. *An experience of fellowship.*

Adversity apparently more conducive than prosperity to this spirit. The immobility of Rome. Reciprocity between Anglican and Nonconformist chaplains at the front. Greater importance to be attached to the new signs of fellowship at home, as they can be less easily discounted.

The first Oxford Conference and its impressions.

Present defects in fellowship :—1. Its patchiness. 2. Marked difference between the attitude of leaders and that of the rank and file.

Necessity of :—1. Breaking down inner as well as outer wall of partition. 2. A "Ministry of Propaganda."

3. *The far-reaching influence of analogies.*

The slow process of the evolution of the social order interrupted by "leaps." The resolve to find a way through —the call to action.

The disappointment of dialectics—Canon Lacey's "Unity and Schism." The opportunity for a bold policy of inter-communion. Reconstructive work in Church and State. The relation of the Church of England "Enabling Bill" to the problem of Reunion. Lessons from the rise of the Y.M.C.A. Its possible services in the cause of Reunion.

Courage the final word for Church as well as State. The gift of "the Spirit of Power."

REUNION AND THE WAR

THE subject of the war has been canvassed by so many people with "special experience" that people with ordinary experience are getting a little tired. The "Church in the Furnace" has recently been described as "a frantic book." An essay by another ex-chaplain may easily incur the charge of epilepsy. It is necessary to go canny to secure a hearing.

A chaplain's discoveries are liable to be dismissed as phenomena already classified, and his outbursts to be discounted as incoherent thinking. His surroundings are assumed to dispose him to theological short cuts, and to detach him from the restraints of historic continuity. In other words, he is liable to run amok and to play the part of the wild man of Borneo coming through the town.

Perhaps there is something in the criticism, and perhaps we are too fond of lashing out, but the heart knoweth its own bitterness. It is one thing to accept the presence of the Roman chapel in your parish as part of your normal experience; and another to see the soldiers of an Irish regiment laboriously erecting two wooden altars in the camp, at a safe distance from one another, lest the Church of Rome should suffer contagion from the Church of England.

It is one thing to acquiesce in the lack of sacramental fellowship with the Nonconformist minister over the way, between whom and you there is a series of border raids and minor sheep-stealing operations; and another thing when you know him as a friend—when you have shared your experience of Christ with him, and worked by his side in the presence of wounds and death.

It is one thing to contemplate young men's ignorance of Christ as the Redeemer when they have all their lives before them; and another thing to come up against it when they are five minutes from eternity. Facts may be known and catalogued without being felt. It is facts which have passed through the crucible of the emotions which really count.

Books like "The Church in the Furnace" and "As Tommy Sees Us," are chapters in the psychology of the war. Remove a man from the aura of femininity which surrounded his ministry; compel him to think in a secular medium; pitch him into a world where rations have an inordinate value; compel him to become independent of externals in the spiritual life; surround him with pals who want no phrases but the naked truth; give him God the Spirit for his Teacher, and the Gospel for his tool; and it is not surprising if in these surroundings his style changes, his needs simplify, he develops new affinities, and jettisons a certain amount of lumber out of his theological valise.

I only wish that the psychological phenomena could cover a wider area. Take our party associations, for example. I wish every member of the E.C.U. had been compelled to reconsider the Confirmation Rubric and

the question of Evening Communion, in the light of the urgency, the uncertainty and the intimate fellowships of war. I wish every member of every Protestant association in the Kingdom had found occasion to face the question of Prayers for the Dead, in the light of broken intercourse, untimely death, and all the spiritual agonies of the battlefield.

Take the fathers in God of the Christian Church, our spiritual leaders and rulers. I should like to read an encyclical written by his Holiness the Pope from the catacombs of Combles, or the minutes of a meeting of the Joint Commission on Faith and Order held under shell-fire at Rheims. I once met the Archbishop of Canterbury in a tin helmet in the shell-wrecked city of Ypres, and it gave me a new idea of episcopacy. If his lower limbs were rooted in tradition, his head was moving with the times. It was a parable and a sign, and I was proud to be an Anglican. But I wish it was seventeen Bishops and not seventeen chaplains who had written a "frantic" book! The outlook might then be more hopeful!

I do not think that the collective war experience of the Church should be lightly set aside. I know that analogy will be urged against me. While a war is in progress, it will be said, we are all in Noah's Ark and cannot help ourselves. The waste of waters is round about, and we cannot escape from each other's company. There is less fighting because there is less elbow-room, and the boat is kept steady for fear of immersion. The affinities of the moment are the outcome of fear or convenience or overwhelming necessity. The "after the flood" history of Noah and his

family is disappointing in the extreme. But there is no record of such spiritual experience, or discoveries of such spiritual affinities, within the ark as have been recorded in the case of the Church of Christ in this war. The analogy may apply to an unregenerate nation, but not to an awakened Church, feeling after union and trying to express a new-found sense of brotherhood. Even a short sea voyage leaves its effect upon character, outlook, and friendship. What is more to our purpose, it gives opportunity for the discovery of mutual love to disturb all pre-arranged programmes.

How much more then may reasonably be expected from a fellowship in suffering that runs into five years, and from experiences so profound, and so widely shared, as those through which we are still passing? This is, I think, what differentiates between the experiences of the Church in the South African War and the present one. We know that the same ecclesiastical irregularities were practised and the same fellowship discovered; but whereas scores of chaplains were affected then, thousands are affected now; and the lapse of time has made it possible for their influence to spread right through the thought and life of the Church while it is still plastic under the influence of war.

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It is easy, of course, to exaggerate the effect of the war upon the problem of reunion. Forces were at work in the world beforehand which were bound to bring it to the front and give great impetus to its solution. The steady and relentless progress of scholarship was

dealing severely with exclusive claims; the need of a world unity, whether in faith or commerce or international relationships, was being acutely felt. Through the influence of the Student Movement, the younger people of all denominations were coming to respect and appreciate one another's position. Great co-operative movements in the mission field were strengthening the demand for organic unity. The effect of the war has been to accelerate and accentuate rather than to initiate or inaugurate.

The rate at which we are now moving may be judged by comparison with the utterances of the Pan-Anglican Conference of 1908, or even of the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. Unity as something "other than anything we can see at present" was a phrase constantly repeated even by those who most earnestly sought it. The proposal for immediate intercommunion amongst Anglicans and Nonconformists at the Lord's Table, which was rejected there by the wisest leadership of the time as a dangerous short cut, now finds powerful support. At Anglican and Free Church fellowship meetings, it is no longer regarded as a wild-cat proposal coming from people void of historical sense. It is rather regarded as a spontaneous demand of the Spirit of God from which there may be no appeal. It is difficult for a younger generation to understand "the emotional intensity of expectation," to use the phrase of W. H. T. Gairdner, with which, at the close of the Edinburgh Conference, the delegates heard the words, "Shall the vote now be taken?" when it is understood that the vote merely involved the setting up of a Continuation Committee, which was expressly stated

"not to involve the idea of organic and ecclesiastical union."

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The effect of the war in relation to reunion may be traced first to an experience of shame, secondly to an experience of fellowship, and thirdly to the influence of analogies, dangerous or inspiring according to the point of view from which they are regarded.

It has been burnt into the consciousness of all Christians that in the year 1914 the Church did not count as a power to preserve the peace of the world. To her former impotence to bring peace to the industrial world was added the further demonstration of her impotence in a world crisis. It is open to the various Churches of Christendom to give what explanation they please of their own ineffectiveness, or to repudiate the blame by transferring it to other shoulders, but the fact remains. The Pope may say it is the fault of the Protestants that he cannot play the part of a modern Hildebrand. The Orthodox Church may blame the arrogant and schismatic tendency of the Papacy. The English Nonconformist may complain that Christian witness in his country is hindered by the influence of a State Church. Impotence, however, is the result, and the knowledge of it has stung the conscience of Christendom. Shame is our portion! "Out of the pit we cry unto thee, O God."

It is true that the outsider may not attach any very great moral value to our shame. He may regard it as no more than the writhing of defeat. He may even believe that the real sting lies in the loss of political

power, he may suspect our movement towards unity to be based upon a purely utilitarian philosophy. He may very probably prefer that we should remain as we are. A half pagan civilisation has less to fear from a divided and distracted Church.

But wherever there is faith in the Church as the Body of Christ, the shame is oppressive. Whatever may be said about the past (and much may be urged to show that the Church has been enriched in thought and holiness and evangelistic power through movements which terminated in schism), it is apparent that to-day the Head of the Church is being put to shame by our divisions. It is not our own impotence but the impotence of Christ which constitutes the crushing humiliation. His witness in the world is ineffective; His atoning Power is circumscribed. The will of God cannot, through our lack of unity, be expressed in large departments of human life. The Kingdom is indefinitely postponed. World Unity is one of the compelling thoughts of to-day; we have nothing with which to match it. Only the other day I heard a preacher say that the Church is the only Body which can go to the representatives of Capital and Labour and say: "Sirs, ye are brethren." He was a layman and ought to have known better. The Church is the one Body which is hopelessly disqualified. The retort is too obvious: "First go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come"—and offer thy mediation. The Gospel is blasphemed through us. That is the measure of our shame.

The result is a very chastened spirit—at least in the case of Anglicans and Nonconformists—a careful

revision of the values of the things which divide, and an eager outlook for a point where separated histories may converge. All the old problems are still with us and still unsolved—historic Episcopacy and historic Independence, equality of ministers and episcopal government. There is, however, no longer pride or truculence, but rather sympathetic study and a profound desire for comprehension.

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The experience of fellowship has been partly the outcome of common adversity and partly the result of exceptional opportunities. In time of prosperity we are rather like the dog with a bone in a corner who prefers the corner to himself; in time of adversity we are more companionable. The Church has always known "how to be abased" much better than it has known "how to abound."

I wish I could say that the spirit of fellowship has made itself universally felt. My own experience compels me to draw a distinction between the Roman and other Communions, not as regards individuals, but as regards policy. Church of England chaplains in France recall many a search in sleet and rain and bitter cold to try to find a building in which to conduct a service, when the Roman Catholic Church was closed against them by authority. On one occasion the need was so desperate that I sought a personal interview with the parish priest. With the utmost courtesy and with infinite regret he explained that the Bishop would not allow it. There is little proselytism in the Army (the authorities do not encourage it on account of the confusion it creates

on official forms), but the Roman attitude as regards salvation outside the Roman Communion remains the same in war as in peace. I can recall the urgency with which one heroic and devoted Roman chaplain pressed upon me that the impending transfer of one of my flock to him should take place before the expected battle, on account of the extreme importance of the step. In these circumstances intimate fellowship is impossible.

It has been different in the case of Anglicans and Nonconformists.[1] Both have been less bound by logic than the Roman Communion and more patient of experiment. Both have proved themselves more sensitive, as was to be expected, to the claims of nationality and patriotism. Neither has inherited such a terrible burden of exclusiveness from the past. The result has been a great deal of official fraternising and unofficial intercommunion. It has varied so much with time and place, and the personal equation, that it would be difficult to analyse or classify it. Men at the front received, without questioning, the Sacrament at the hands of Presbyterians or Wesleyans, where their own Church of England padre was not available. Few Church of England padres would repel Nonconformists from the Sacrament for lack of Confirmation. I know at least of one troopship from overseas where the Church of England and Presbyterian padres celebrated alternately for the Communicants of both denomina-

[1] The profoundly interesting and encouraging developments which have recently taken place in the relationship of the Church of England to the Serbian and other branches of the Orthodox Church are outside the scope of this Essay.

tions—a very great advance on Kikuyu, where the proposals involved what would be called in Ireland merely "one-sided reciprocity." United conferences of chaplains and united services have been frequent.

Very probably, however, any movement towards fellowship at home, though less dramatic, is of more importance; for the exceptional circumstances at the front secure toleration from those who normally disapprove of such acts of intercommunion, and at the same time make it difficult to build a policy upon them. We cannot quite expect the theologians to be stampeded by what appear to them to be sporadic acts in the firing line. The danger is that these acts will be courteously discounted on the ground that it is impossible to legislate for what is abnormal or to define the limits of Christian charity. This is a real danger; for I cannot agree that because a thing is "sporadic" it is without any value. It may witness to an element in human nature for which allowance has not been made. It may constitute a phenomenon indicating the wreck of an elaborate theory. It may indicate a new beginning or be the prelude to a great discovery. Ocean traffic between Europe and America was once nothing more than the sporadic act of a few Spanish ships. All the wealth of the Indies and the destinies of a new world hung upon the sporadic act of a Columbus.

The spirit of fellowship at the first Oxford Conference of Evangelicals within and without the Church of England, of which this book is an outcome, was so strong that the failure to express it sacramentally seemed a painful solecism. To some of us loyalty to tradition

seemed disobedience to the Spirit. Almost "our honour rooted in dishonour stood." It became a passion to find a way out into some plane where questions of order no longer arrested the common action of those who held a common creed and shared a common life. We searched our consciences in guilty fear lest we should be blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

There is no doubt that the kind of co-operation which has been increasingly common between Anglicans and Nonconformists is far from exhausting what opportunity demands. It lags behind the spiritual appetite. We want to blend the common stream of our adoration of our Redeemer, to make one common act of worship, to find one altar, not many altars, to seal our common search after God and our common experience of His love revealed in Christ by sharing together in that one service where fellowship, loyalty and adoration are so perfectly blended.

I cannot escape from the reasoning that with whatever company of Christians the Head of the Church is present there His Body is present also. "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst." If the presence of the whole Church is to be associated with the devout worshipper at a Roman Mass, it is also to be associated with the devout communicant breaking bread in the most despised conventicle; and I can imagine circumstances in which I would gladly share in the worship of the one, or the communion of the other. In the case of several of the great Communions which make up Nonconformity in England I can find no *a priori* reason against intercommunion, sacramental or otherwise. It resolves itself into ques-

tions of loyalty and expediency and relative values. If I were able to think, like Cyprian, that the Bishop is the indispensable centre of unity, or, like Leo and his successors, that the Pope is such a centre, I should be saved much vexation of spirit; but as the matter stands, I have to ask myself how far private judgment is to be restrained by authority; how far one is justified in taking the risk of splitting one's own Communion; where one is to draw the line or on what principle. These are not questions easily answered, and too little consideration may have been given to them in the formulation of some programmes. It does not follow, however, that because things are difficult we are to do nothing, or because a course is dangerous it is not to be followed; it only means that this passion for unity must be a passion of the mind as well as of the heart.

There are two outstanding difficulties in connection with the movement towards fellowship. In the first place, it is unequally distributed, it is patchy—the flowing tide leaves many sand banks uncovered. Internal fellowship within each Communion is not progressing at the same rate as sectional fellowship between some of those within and some of those without. This is the case at any rate within the Church of England, and constitutes a real danger. It is at least as important to secure intercommunion between those who wear vestments and those who do not, as to secure intercommunion between those who have Bishops and those who have not. The man who is prepared to sacrifice fellowship with an Evangelical for the sake of recognition from Rome is still in the gall and bitterness of sectarianism; and the man who seeks reunion with

Nonconformists without trying to carry his High Church brethren along with him has not got the faintest glimmer of Catholicity. The men best fitted to break down the outer walls which divide us from other Communions are those who have gained experience from breaking down inner walls of partition.

The same thing applies to the Free Churches, at any rate treated as a federation practising intercommunion. I know Primitive Methodists whose feelings are much more cordial to the Church of England than to the Wesleyans. A well-known Archdeacon tells the story of how he was asked on one occasion to lay the foundation stone of a new Nonconformist chapel to be erected in his parish. When he ventured to refuse, the incoming minister called upon him to remonstrate. "You entirely misunderstand the situation," he said. "We are not coming into this parish to fight *you*, but the other chapel!" This spirit needs to be exorcised. The coming of reunion depends upon the growth amongst all members of Christ's Body, of the spirit of love, pouring itself out in admiration, appreciation and mutual kindness. Toleration might lead to federation of a cold blooded sort, but never to organic unity. It is love alone that unites in things of the spirit. Any limitation of its influence is a lessening of the hope of reunion. There is no lasting constructive work apart from it. Constitutions drawn up without it are so much wasted paper. The rate of progress towards the goal corresponds with the rapidity and strength of its growth.

The other difficulty is that leaders in the Churches are so far ahead of their followers in this matter, both in knowledge of the subject and freedom from local

embarrassments. It is the statesman who recognises the need, the mystic who sees the vision, the saint who feels the shame, but the rank and file who see the difficulties. Views are coloured by local incidents and local people. The larger mind may resist successfully the invasion of jealousy, resentment, and all the disagreeable phenomena which we describe euphemistically as "the personal element"; the smaller mind succumbs to it. A great deal of this has been eliminated by the war. It has been a golden time for shedding views and forming new opinions. Overwhelming experiences have submerged much pettiness and aloofness in village life. The new opportunities of judging character at close quarters have led to a revision of judgment. Clergy and ministers, deacons and churchwardens, have shared in these improved relationships which count for far more than the pure theologian would imagine. But there is still much to be done in the cultivation of mutual understanding and appreciation between denominational representatives.

So, too, there remains much to be done in educating the rank and file in the whole subject of reunion. Lectures on its theory, propaganda on its importance, and accounts of its progress are wanted. Advertisement and publicity are essential to any modern movement. When will the Church learn to concentrate on "issues" with the intensity of a political party or the Harmsworth Press? We have had an extremely efficient Ministry of Propaganda in enemy countries. We want a Ministry of Reunion Propaganda amongst the divided denominations.

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It is in the region of analogy that we find the most potent influence exerted by the war on the whole subject of reunion. It is impossible to escape the pressure of suggestion which comes to us on every side. We find that the course of evolution in social and political matters is suddenly hastened by great "leaps," which indicate that we ought at a time like this, to work for rapid progress in the reorganisation of the Church's organic life. It is time that we did what previous generations talked about. Action is the order of the day. The days of division and subtraction are over, and we ought to be busy at permutations and combinations. We have been compelled to discard theories and to deal drastically with the practical situation in order to survive as a nation. The Church has its own survival to think about, if it is not to assist at its own funeral. The promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it is no guarantee that any particular form of institutional religion is immune from decay. What has "emerged" in history may be "submerged." An intransigeant attitude may lead to the scrap heap. The determination to force a way through to the desired goal, which lies at the back of all military effort, is nothing short of a challenge to the Church to achieve reunion. It ought no longer to be possible for anyone to say that "while nations can forgive and forget and execute treaties and recast maps, the Church, which is the repository of universal brotherhood, can do none of these things."

I do not think that the brilliant dialectics of Canon T. A. Lacey will hold up the pressure of these analogies. His argument in "Unity and Schism," if I understand

it aright, is that "the unity of the Church is original. . . . You cannot restore the integrity of a seamless robe by turning it into a garment of patchwork. . . ." He rejects federation on the ground that it is based upon the principle of independency and the recognition of denominations as separate churches. It traverses the unity of Apostolic days, and is "inconsistent with fundamental theory." The essential unity of the Church is the criterion on which, curiously enough, he breaks each practical proposal to give it effect. He will not distinguish between proposals that are interim and absolute. If, for example, the Mansfield College Conference of the Evangelical Free Churches produces a scheme of federation as a step towards realising this "essential unity," he brings dialectics at once to bear upon the situation. "Essential unity. They wish to investigate it. Then it is a fact. Then why federation ?" The present desperate situation will not be solved by logic. Mr. Lacey himself admits that "we are not to ask for a perfectly coherent theory of the Church." Is he entitled to ask at the moment for a perfectly coherent theory of the whole process of reunion, before any practical steps can be taken ? His conception of the brotherhood of all the baptized is most embarrassing. The relationship is so extremely hampering. It prevents, for example, anything in the nature of alliance or federation. *That* might suggest we were not brothers to begin with. Brothers, it is argued, do not federate ! On the other hand, it does not allow intercommunion. That would be to recognise the reality of denominationalism. We are caught in a perfect mesh of dialectics. From the

most evangelical theory we arrive at the most rigid conclusions.

I do not think the after-war theologian will be content to argue in this way. It is difficult to see how a robe, if it is to remain in use, can be repaired without some patchwork. If the Church is to be rewoven on the loom, its institutional life must begin *de novo.* I would prefer the illustration of a broken limb. It needs splints and bandages to enable it to set. The process is purely temporary and remedial. No one wants to go about with splints and bandages for ever. Perfect health will discard them, but the Church is a long way from perfect health as yet. Nor do splints and bandages deny any fundamental theory of the human body. They simply assist the work of nature. It is in this way I look upon any proposals for federation. They are to be judged on their merits, independent of any fundamental theory of Church unity. They are only provisional arrangements until the health of the Body of Christ is restored. A league of the Churches need no more deny the essential unity of the Church than a league of nations denies the essential solidarity of mankind.

I long to see some interim policy applied to the question of intercommunion. Now that there is a growing recognition that those who seek reunion need not be required to "disown their past," the situation has become much easier. Whatever fusion of Orders may take place in the future, we have discarded the mutual offer of the white sheet of penance and public recantation in the market-place. Surrender is not part of our policy. Even subtle distinctions between what

is irregular and invalid have lost their charm. They do not work. They are only clever. The war has affected the ecclesiastical temper in our country to an amazing degree. "Casuistry" is out of favour. Common sense is dominant. The interest has shifted at last from theory to practice. There is a passion now to get results. Committees are a byword and an honest rebel counts more than a talker. It is the day of the man of action, and the ecclesiastic feels it in his bones.

Now is the time for a bold and forward policy. The tremendous possibilities of the moment must not be allowed to evaporate in better feeling. To plunge into fellowship which is not allowed to express itself sacramentally is to plunge into an engagement without hope of marriage. The deeper the love, the more distracting the condition. All the encouragement which we are receiving from our leaders to closer co-operation with one another only leads to the disaster of falling in love with no prospect of a happy issue out of our affliction!

Let our leaders devise what safeguards they will. Let them define their action, in whatever way they like, as being without prejudice to the solution of the question of Orders. Let them proceed at first with such caution as may reasonably be necessary, in the case of particular denominations; only let them open up to us a road whereby those who are equally partakers of divine grace, and in whose hearts there is a reciprocal desire for fellowship, may meet unashamed at the Table of their Lord.

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The war has not witnessed as yet any such reconstructive measures in regard to the Church as have followed in such quick succession in the case of the nation. We have nothing to parallel, for example, the Education Act or the Extension of the Franchise, or the rapid strides towards Collectivism initiated under the presiding genius of D.O.R.A. In the case of the Church of England, at any rate, it is pardonable. She is controlled by Parliament, and Parliament is busy with other matters. But it is hard lines if the Church of England, the oldest and, in some ways, the most rigid institution in the country, is to reap no advantage from this wonderfully fluid and plastic time through which we are passing. The Cause of reunion is intimately bound up with the prospect of the Church of England securing her freedom of action, either in alliance or apart from the State. How can we carry out the many programmes suggested to us by our friends, who admire the beauty of our spirit rather than the beauty of our form, without the urgent and concentrated attention of Parliament?

The Enabling Bill, therefore, which it is hoped to present to Parliament this year, the intention of which is to secure the largest instalment of liberty of action possible under the present system of Establishment, must be regarded as a measure that makes for reunion; and all the driving power that the passion for reunion can supply should be behind the Bill to pass it into law. Therein lies the hope of abolishing blemishes and abuses which hinder and repel.

Similarly, the Free Churches need to achieve a far greater freedom than they possess at present. If the

Enabling Bill is passed, it is the Church of England which will be more free, not less free, than others to modify its constitution and reform its manners. All denominations are more or less hampered by their own "Acts of Uniformity," and ought to take advantage of the psychology of the moment. Men must be masters in their own houses if they are to treat with one another on equal terms. Before we get very far on the path to reunion, greater elasticity in relation to the State and to our own constitutions must be secured by all of us. There is an urgent demand everywhere for the appearance of a Christian statesman with a "concern" for Church Reform. He has his part to play quite as much as the Christian saint in the drama of reunion. Now is the time for him to act. A nation which has seen the fountains of the great deep broken up, and has learned to think in terms of world unity, will be prepared to listen to him on his merits.

One factor of immense importance has loomed upon the horizon, and is gradually assuming gigantic proportions. It is the work of the Y.M.C.A. The history of its rise and of its relation to the nation is of immense significance. Before the war it was weak and insignificant in this country, a loose bundle of Evangelical activities. Now it is almost œcumenical, with a strong grip on education and social reform. Its platform is catholic and its activities far-reaching. The explanation lies in the nation's need, and in the elasticity and interdenominational possibilities of the Y.M.C.A. The nation may have no particular affection for a National Church which has divorced the spiritual

from the secular, and which has lost the human touch of its Master; but it is prepared to welcome and entrust with responsibility any organisation which brings the Christian spirit to bear upon the redemption of human life. The function of a National Church needs to be reconsidered in the light of the extraordinary history of the Y.M.C.A.

The present situation, however, is not without its danger to the cause of reunion. Here is a vast organisation which has far outgrown the thought which created it, whose limbs are sprawling about in loose co-ordination with its head. What is to be its future? If once the problem is stated in the terms "The Y.M.C.A. and the Churches," the danger of a new sect is imminent. The ominous example of the Salvation Army, and its similar profession of services to all the denominations, recurs to the mind. Is the Y.M.C.A. willing to become the organ of the Church of Christ, sinking even its own independence to afford the Church the self-expression which she needs in regard to the social life of the nation? If so, it must, in the opinion of many of its sincerest friends, do three things. (1) Abandon its hap-hazard methods of arranging for its "birth" in new localities. (2) Revise its constitution and bring its provincial centres into organic relation with its National Council. (3) Concede to the denominations, until such time as reunion is achieved, the right to nominate representatives to its national and provincial governing bodies. At present the Y.M.C.A. stands entirely outside the organised institutional life of the Church. Its relations are friendly, its spirit admirable, its statesmanship progressive; but it is still "The

Y.M.C.A. and the Churches," dealing with them on equal and more than equal terms, inviting, discriminating, accepting and refusing.

What really gives us confidence in a situation not without perplexity, is the magnificent spirit which is to be found at headquarters, the intellectual strength of the advisory committee which it has called into existence, and its evident determination to overtake its arrears of thinking. The Y.M.C.A. may yet prove to be the God-given means for conserving the new spirit of fellowship, and for accustoming the denominations to such joint action as may demonstrate the need for a closer and deeper unity.

I desire to close on the note of courage. The Church which has seen the nation persevere through such dark days, and finally arrive at such prospects as are now ours, might well take heart of grace. But we have a deeper source of confidence. God hath given to us "not the spirit of fear but of power"—power to learn and to repair mistakes; power to profit by experience and to cement new bonds; power to grow up to God and into one another; power to manifest the life and mind of Christ. We refuse to submit to fear of any kind, fear of the unknown, or fear of the obstinacy of human temperament, fear of reaction, or fear of novelty. The world's demonstrations of power have thrown us back upon the power of the Spirit of God. Through the bitter experience of war we march to reunion.

> "Power is with us in the night
> Which makes the darkness and the light,
> And dwells not in the light alone."

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCHES

By the REV. ROBERT F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.,
Ex-President of the Congregational Union.

SYNOPSIS

The necessity of recognising the Spirit's work in the churches —the recognition is often one-sided—too objective, when the spirit is identified with the Church organisation and sacraments—or too subjective when only exceptional Spiritual experiences are recognised as the work of the Spirit. A more disastrous mistake is the sectarian notion that the Spirit is confined to one, *i.e.*, my Church. The Spirit's work is to be traced not only in all Churches, but beyond the Churches in the whole world. St. Basil's *De Spiritu Sancto* quoted. Care must be taken in identifying the Spirit's work to remember the two essential characteristics of the Spirit, viz., Holiness and Spirituality, and not to predicate the Spirit's presence where these are wanting.

The Spirit's work then is to be traced

(1) in all who are really born again by faith in Christ ;

(2) in all lives that are striving to be like Him ;

(3) in the constant emergence of Spiritual leaders, apostles, prophets, poets ;

(4) in the ever-renewed influence of Christ and His Gospel ;

(5) in the periodical quickenings which come age after age ;

(6) in the steady urge of things onward and upward, and lastly

(7) in the present aspiration after Unity in the several members of the Church.

Tracing the Spirit's work in the Church we are led to cooperate, and to submit ourselves as the organs of the Spirit's purpose.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCHES

It is the part of reverence and faith not only to recognise that the Holy Spirit is in the Churches, but to understand the sure signs of His presence. For nothing would be more dishonouring to Christ than to doubt the fulfilment of the promise which He made. All inquiries about the Holy Spirit, in the light of Christ's declaration, must start from the fact that the Spirit's presence is here, if we have the heart to feel, and His signs are before us, if we have the eyes to see—

> 'Tis like at no one time
> Of the world's story, has not Truth, the prime
> Of Truth, the very Truth, which, loosed, had hurled
> The world's course right, been really in the world.

Our first prayer, therefore, should be to recognise the Holy Spirit as He is in the Church, and, let us add, in the World, to-day. And the fundamental mistake into which we are constantly falling is that we continue to ask for the Spirit, without perceiving that the Spirit is here; by neglecting the primary duty of recognising the Spirit we render ourselves incapable of further progress. But our inquiry at once becomes fruitful if we purge our eyes and see how that promise of the Paraclete was and is fulfilled, and how the prayer of our Redeemer, "the tenderest and the last," is

answered. This is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, not in the sense that now for the first time we have to seek and receive the Spirit, but in the sense that now for nearly two thousand years the Spirit has been at work, continuing and extending the personal activity of our Redeemer; and we in this generation are called upon to yield ourselves to the gracious power of the Spirit, to live in the faith that this is the Day, and we are the Knights, of the Holy Ghost.

The recognition of the Holy Spirit is at one time too objective, at another too subjective, and from either extreme the right understanding of that Divine Presence recedes. It is too objective when the work of the Spirit is identified too strictly with the frame, organisation, and operations of the Church. As, for example, in the phrase which Cardinal Manning made familiar, "the Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost," it was suggested that the Roman Church was the complete and exclusive expression of the Eternal Spirit in time. For if we are to believe that the Church which culminates in the infallibility of the Pope is the sole manifestation of the Holy Spirit, not only do we leave out of account certain manifestations of the Spirit outside those limits, but we learn to attribute to the Holy Spirit the characteristics of the Roman Church in their entirety, the Inquisition, for example, and the burning of heretics. But it is no exaggeration to say that, when a man seriously believes that the burning of heretics is the work of the Holy Spirit he blasphemes the Spirit and becomes incapable of recognising His operations. In the same way, the hard and mechanical identification of the Holy Spirit with the Sacraments

of the Church not only blinds the eyes to the work of the Spirit outside the Sacraments, but gradually deadens the perception to all that is characteristically spiritual. I once saw some tracts which were circulated to promote this view of the Sacraments, *ex opere operato*; one was entitled: "Have you been born again, or, in other words, have you been christened?"; and another: "Have you received the Holy Ghost, or, in other words, have you been confirmed?" Such an identification of the Holy Spirit with the Sacraments may easily render the mind incapable of discerning the Spirit. If the baptized and confirmed as such are the Spirit's work, the standard is indeed confused; for the baptized and confirmed are in some cases not holy, and in many cases not spiritual. Thus the Holy Spirit is placed where His two distinctive marks do not appear. We have to dread not only an exclusiveness which narrows and warps the mind that entertains it, but a positive delusion which produces spiritual blindness. The apathy, and even deadness, which is paralysing the Church in many parts of the world is to be traced to this cause: the people have been taught to identify the Holy Spirit with the Church organisation, and the Church ordinances; and finding in those neither holiness, nor spiritual life, they lose faith, and deny, *i.e.* practically blaspheme, the Spirit by whom they were sealed. It is a grave error not to teach Christians to receive the Holy Spirit; it is an even graver error to teach them that some very human, faulty, and even sinful things are the work of the Spirit. The one is ignorance, the other is perversion.

But while some miss the workings of the Spirit by taking this too objective view of His operations, there is an equal danger in taking too subjective a view. Our attention is turned to the unusual instances of spiritual achievement; to the men and the women who have come in an exceptional way under the power of the Spirit. We are led to think that only in these exceptional cases, only in these Spirit-filled personalities, does the Spirit appear. This is the error of the early Montanists; into this error Molinos, and Mme. Guyon, and many writers on the subject of holiness and Christian perfection fell. The Holy Spirit is identified with, and confined to, certain rare personalities that have by a peculiar travail attained to a kind of celestial life on earth. But just as it is a mistake to confine the Spirit to the organised Church, and to become blind to His work outside those limited borders, so is it a mistake to confine the Spirit to the few highest instances of spiritual endowment, and to become blind to the Spirit's far-reaching and omnipresent workings.

Those rare experiences of the Spirit's work are of priceless value. That sudden illumination and inspiration which came once to James Russell Lowell, never afterwards repeated—"I never before so clearly felt the Spirit of God in me and around me. The whole room seemed to me full of God. The air seemed to waver to and fro with the presence of Something I knew not what. I spoke with the calmness and clearness of a prophet" (James, *Variety of Religious Experience*, p. 66)—must not be taken to show that the Spirit was only in him on that occasion, and did not work in the poems and other writings of that pure and

gifted nature. An exceptional experience is rather, like our Lord's Transfiguration, to be taken as an evidence of what is there always, though unseen.

> Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
> Cannot confound, or doubt Him, or deny.
> Yea, with one breath, O world, though thou deniest,
> Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

The Spirit's work is undoubtedly revealed in the exceptional persons, and in the rare moments of ordinary life; but we are misled and deluded if we are tempted to confine His work within such limits. It may be that nothing hinders the Spirit's work in the Church more than the refusal to recognise Him except in the "Saints," or in Revivals, or in the excitement of Conventions. Exceptional experiences are hurtful unless we distinctly see that they are exceptional, and are given to convince us of what is going on constantly. And, similar to these causes of Spiritual blindness is the sectarian spirit which identifies the Holy Spirit with one Church, the one to which we belong. Whether the error is made by Pietism or Catholicism, the blinding effect is the same. Some obscure little sect flatters itself that it alone is the Church, its members alone are the elect, they alone the organ of the Spirit; its piety turns sour, its Spiritual life decays into a dull fanaticism. Or the great Church of the West, with the Pope as its head, rules out all other Churches, denies their Orders, charges them with heresy and schism, and will have it that the Holy Ghost operates only through her ministry and sacraments; the effect is just the same. Religion turns sour; it embitters human life; it deadens thought, and crushes progress. The blindness to the

Spirit's working outside the borders produces a warped view of the working within the borders. To identify the Church with one form of it, to refuse to recognise the Spirit outside that one organisation, is the delusion which causes and maintains all our divisions.

At the close of that earliest treatise on the Holy Spirit, which has come down to us from the fourth century, Basil the Great's *De Spiritu Sancto*, we find the most hopeless description of the Church, before its separation into East and West. No gloomier picture was ever painted than this of the Church under the image of a naval battle, the combatants rushing to the attack, and with an outburst of irrepressible fury engaging in the desperate struggle. The unity of the Church is no guarantee of the unity of Spirit; while the delusion of a part of the divided Church that it is the whole is a fatal hindrance to recovering the unity of the Spirit.

Indeed, so far from the Spirit being confined to one part of the Church, it is a delusion to confine His working to the Church at all, forgetting how He first brooded on Chaos to create a World, and how He was breathed into the human form to create a man. As St. Basil says, in the treatise just cited: "Rising to the sublimest thoughts, we are compelled to think of an intellectual essence, infinite in power, illimitable in magnitude, immeasurable by periods or ages; who ungrudgingly imparts His excellence; unto whom all things needing sanctification turn; for whom all things living long according to their excellence, being, as it were, watered by His breath, and assisted to attain their own proper and natural end; perfective

of all else, Himself lacking nothing; who lives not because He is endowed with life, but because He is the giver of life; who does not grow by additions, but is at once full, self-sustaining, and everywhere present, the source of sanctification, light invisible, who as it were illuminates every faculty of reason in its search for truth; unapproachable by nature, accessible by reason of His goodness; filling all things by His power, but communicable only to the worthy; not shared by all in the same degree, but distributing His energy according to the proportion of faith; simple in essence, manifold in powers; wholly present with every individual, and wholly everywhere; impassibly divided, and shared without division, like a sunbeam, whose gracious influence is as much his who enjoys it as though he were alone in the world, but which also blends with the air, and shines over land and sea. Thus too the Spirit is present with everyone who receives Him, as if there were only one receiver, but bestows sufficient and complete grace on all; whom all things that partake of Him enjoy according to the capacity of their nature, not to the extent of His power" (ix, s. 22).

Here we have in the rich vein of the great Cappadocian a definition of the Holy Spirit so ample and yet so exact that, guided by it, we may hope to find the Spirit in the Churches, as a part of the larger theme, the Spirit in the Universe.

Only, before we proceed with our inquiry let us realise that the two concurrent marks of the Holy Spirit are Holiness and Spirit; that is, the test of His presence is always whether holiness is there, and

whether we can recognise the spiritual as distinct from the material, or the formal, or the mechanical. Men generally need some help to realise what holiness is, and what the spiritual is; but here is no room to turn aside into such a byway of definition. We must be content to remind ourselves of this truism, which is the profoundest truth: The Spirit is always to be traced as Spirit, and the Holy Spirit as holiness. Thus if we would recognise the Spirit in the Churches, and so be in the way of furthering His holy work, we must turn our eyes to the phenomena which manifest Him. To look at the organisation of the Church is too external, too mechanical; to dwell exclusively on those rare natures and lives which have exhibited the fulness of the Spirit's work, blinds by excess of light. But we must take a deeper, and at the same time a wider, view.

Broadly speaking, there are seven lines of investigation, which may be thus enumerated: the Spirit's work is seen (1) in all who are born again by faith in Jesus Christ; (2) in every life that strives after likeness to Christ and obedience to His laws; (3) in the constant emergence of those gifted spirits, prophets, apostles, poets, who are able to lead and nourish the Church from age to age, and to extend its borders; (4) in what seems the ever self-renewed influence of Christ and His gospel in the world; (5) in the great quickenings which come, sometimes locally and sometimes œcumenically, and leave their marks on the Church; (6) in the steady urge of things upward and Godward; (7) in that aspiration for Unity which, never entirely absent, sometimes, as now, becomes acute.

If we may for a moment prosecute this survey of the Spirit's work in the Churches, we may obtain, on the one hand, a very sure conviction of His presence, and, on the other, a practical part in His divine operations for the future; and we may promote that reunion of the churches which seems now to be in view. Let us therefore start from that saying of our Lord: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (John iii, 5).

I. *The Spirit's work is seen in every regenerate soul.*—The identification of the baptized with Christians is only justified, if by baptized is understood "born of water and the Spirit," and "buried with Christ in baptism," and "risen with Him to newness of life." The "twice-born," if the term is to be used in any real, and not merely formal, sense, are not the baptized population of a Christian country, in contrast with the non-Christian world beyond, but those persons whose baptism includes, whether by the prayer and faith of others or by a personal choice—and unless the personal choice confirms the prayer and faith of others, no effectual work of the Spirit can be traced—an actual and working regeneration of the Holy Spirit. Probably no one is concerned to dispute this position, and if the case is rightly stated, there would be a general concurrence of opinion throughout Christendom; it is not the water of baptism in itself, which demonstrates the Spirit's presence, but it is the Spirit's presence, transforming and informing the soul, that differentiates the act of baptism from the real result which is symbolised, and therefore justifies the symbol as the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace.

The twice-born, therefore, wherever they are seen, in whatsoever strange conditions and surroundings, known or disguised by whatsoever name, are the recognisable work of the Holy Ghost. Where the flowers are the seed has been; and as the seed in the soil is viewless until it appears in the plant that springs from it, so the invisible Spirit comes into evidence in these blossoms, in these souls of human beings that are born from above. Growing sometimes in beds and borders, or in rich masses, but blooming sometimes on the mountain ledges, or on the very fringes of the snow, nay, sometimes even, like the soldanella, piercing the snow, and forcing its way from the fruitful ground, to smile and bloom above the snowy waste, these flowers of the Holy Ghost appear in the earth, and mark the Spirit's presence and power by their unearthly beauty. The twice-born are they who, though sprung from the earth and living in earthly relations, have their intentions and aspirations turned Godward. Their new-birth is manifest in this, that they are conscious of God, they are at one with God, they live for God; for them Christ is the Saviour from sin, the Lord and giver of life, the hope of glory. The life they live is not their own, but Christ lives in them. For them to live is Christ. All this life is the work and manifestation of the Spirit. No one dares to number the twice-born; no wise person undertakes to sit in judgment and to say definitely whether an individual is twice-born or not; but, on the other hand, no one is in any doubt concerning their existence, or fails to recognise the difference which is conveyed by the term.

If we say that baptism as such is the work of the Spirit, and the baptized, as such, are the Spiritual, we create a soul-deadening confusion ; but if we point out that the spiritually living are the work of the Spirit, that those who once were dead in trespasses and sins are now alive unto God, and that Christians are they who exhibit these signs of their new-birth, we take our stand on a reality which everyone is able and ready to recognise. Though there is a vagueness in outline, and we naturally shrink from making the classification ourselves, there is no doubt about the mass-distinctions ; there are, and we all know it, multitudes of persons in all countries, in all ranks, in all ages, who are born of the Spirit, and maintain in time a life which belongs to eternity. These are the constant evidence to the world of a life beyond the world, God's witness of Himself in the midst of humanity. If the twice-born were removed from the earth, men would relapse, and be nothing but a higher order of mammals, to be classified scientifically with other non-human species ; but the twice-born are a perpetual proof that man is distinct from, though connected with, the other orders of life on the planet ; they link human life to the Divine, the material with the Spiritual, earth with heaven. They are the work of the Spirit.

II. *The Spirit's work is seen in the striving after Christ.*—Before the new birth comes there is the sign of the Spirit in the aspiration, and the instinctive inclination, of the human heart towards Christ. "No man," it is written, "can call Jesus Lord but by the Spirit." And men do call Jesus Lord far outside the

circle of those who know Him in the intimate character of His Saviour-hood. Here is an indication of the Spirit's activity which is seldom adequately recognised. When, for example, Mill said that the best rule of conduct he could suggest was so to act as to win the approval of Jesus of Nazareth, there was the implicit confession of one who had been brought up sedulously apart from Christ that He is Lord. That great Hindoo, Keshub Chandra Sen, though he never embraced the Christian faith, yielded to Christ an unquestioning reverence and devotion which no avowed Christian could surpass: "None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus, ever deserved this bright, this precious diadem of India; and Jesus shall have it"; and it is said that in India to-day, though the number of professed Christians is but one in a hundred of the population, Christ is almost universally recognised as the moral and spiritual authority. The same thing is observed in China and Japan. Though there is much hesitation in accepting the Church, or entering it, Christ steals in on the hearts of men, and the Spirit is seen taking of the things of Christ and showing them to many.

And though in Christendom we have the exasperated revolters from the Church including Christ in their denunciation of the whole system, the most embittered of these opponents are frequently drawn to His feet, and even when they remain unconvinced and unconverted they are found to make an exception in their hearts; they admit that the Sermon on the Mount is the highest moral code, or they admit that the "prophet of Galilee" is the greatest religious force in the world,

or they make it plain that if they deny the truth of Christ, they yet wish Christ were a reality. Thus the instinctive confession of Christ, the work of the Spirit, is found even in the ranks of His opponents.

But leaving aside the avowed opponents and the avowed believers in Christ, no fair investigator can miss the fact that there is a correspondence between Christ and the human heart. The Son of Man makes an appeal to men; He satisfies the human instincts; He meets the demand, which is intrinsic to human nature, for light, and truth, and purity, and love. And the rich truth of His pity for our sorrows, and His power to save us from our sins, comes with an almost irresistible power to human nature as such.

> Far and wide though all unknowing
>   Pants for Thee each human breast,
> Human tears for Thee are flowing,
>   Human hearts in Thee would rest.

It is this fact of humanity being "naturally Christian," as Tertullian put it, that reveals the presence and working of the Holy Spirit; it made the Church, and maintains it; it is the guarantee for the future. Just as the very existence of the world and of life is the evidence of the Creative Power, so the fact of Christ, the fact of His coming, the fact of His Church, the fact of His gradually extending sway, is the evidence of the Spirit. No man apart from the Spirit can call Jesus Lord, and yet an ever-widening circle of human beings call Him Lord; some come to Him and find Him, and are born again; but others own Him at a distance, acknowledge that He has spoken the words of life, and see that the one way of making a happy and holy world would be to make Jesus Lord.

III. *The constant emergence of Apostles, Prophets, Poets.*—If our attention is turned to the hierarchy of the Christian Church as, in itself, distinctively the work of the Holy Spirit, the impression made upon the mind is blurred. Neither in the popular judgment, nor in the more studied estimate of scholars, do ordained persons, as such, present a very luminous demonstration of the Spirit. But, if, disregarding formal orders, and looking only at personalities, we begin to observe how the Spirit has wrought, and is always working, in the Church, we obtain a most impressive evidence of the Divine purpose. Apostles as such are not spiritual—there was Judas; but those men who first bore that name as a body, with John and Paul at their head, are a marvellous manifestation of the Spirit. Again, among the prophets there have always been false prophets; and yet the prophets, from Moses onward, have been a marvellous manifestation of the Spirit. The Fathers were not all either consistent or illuminating; and yet the line of them from Origen to Bernard is a marvellous manifestation of the Spirit. No one would claim for the doctors of the Church, whether Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, or Hooker or Calvin, infallibility; but none can fail to see in the mighty work of human reason applied to the understanding and the formulation of the truth of God a marvellous manifestation of the Spirit. And so with the ordinary ministers of the Church, bishops, priests, deacons, teachers, pastors, evangelists, the slur which literature casts on them, and the popular judgment, forbid us to insist on the view that these are all the organs and the mouth-

pieces of God ; but regard them in the light of character and service, and this constant supply of ministers of Christ's Gospel, some very eminent, like Leo the First or Gregory the Great, some labouring in limited spheres, like Fletcher of Madeley or Richard Baxter, like Oberlin or the curé d'Ars, some leaving behind them gleaming tracks which the world cannot forget, others passing away in obscurity, known only to heaven, is a marvellous manifestation of the Spirit.

And—though this is not always remembered—the ministry of literature, the devotional writers, the poets, present us with a great and never dying demonstration of the Spirit. Dante and Thomas à Kempis, Bunyan and William Law, Milton and Wordsworth, and the vast host of writers who are less distinguished but, in their degree, not less influential, last from generation to generation ; and their words carry in them the breath of the Spirit and the teaching of the Spirit to a remote posterity. The lady Julian of Norwich, or Richard Rolle of Hampden, awakes and speaks to us after slumbering for five or six centuries. Thomas Traherne lies dormant for three centuries and then takes his place with Herbert and with Vaughan. And this because the Spirit spoke, and speaks, in these writers. The Psalter of the Christian Church, Bernard of Clairvaux, Watts and Wesley, Keble and Newman, like the Psalms of the Jewish Church, is the way by which we speak to one another, and to God, in Spiritual Songs all down the ages. The perpetual unification of the divided Church has been secured by the Spirit in this remarkable way : the seers have spoken, the doctors have taught, and above

all the poets have sung, the things which have held men of all tongues, races, and forms of worship together in an actual life of the Spirit. First the New Testament writers, then the Fathers of the Church, then the Reformers of the Church, and all through the ages the writers of psalms, hymns and canticles have made a community of truths, ideas, beliefs and acts of worship, which has in some degree answered our Lord's prayer at the beginning "that they all may be one."

IV. *In the ever-renewed influence of Christ and of His Gospel* the work of the Spirit is plain to those who will be at the pains to observe. Harnack, in his *Expansion of Christianity* in the first three centuries, gives a vivid picture of the beginnings; but that expansion goes on in the same way, and by very similar methods, in our own day. The seed cast into the ground gradually swells and grows. The nineteenth century followed on the age of Deism and Rationalism. But out of that unpromising age came the renewal of Christ's influence in the Evangelical revival; and the Gospel began to have free course and to be glorified, as at the first. The transformation of the islands of the Pacific, Samoa, Fiji, Madagascar, New Zealand, was a miracle to which there was no exact parallel in the first age of Christianity. The Dark Continent of Africa was penetrated by Livingstone, and Christ has claimed Bechuanaland, Uganda, and the basin of the Congo. As Krapf saw, the march of Christ through that continent was marked by the graves of the pioneers; but in the first three centuries the Gospel of Christ showed no such power of conversion and regeneration as the nineteenth century has seen in

Africa. And during the same period the most ancient and settled civilisation in the world, that of China, received the same impact, and underwent the same change, as had come to Africa and the South Seas. The life of Hudson Taylor, whether we have regard to the manner of his call, to the greatness of his design, or to the significance of his achievement—one thousand missionaries sent to China during his lifetime—is as apostolic as that of St. Paul. These are but very general illustrations of a fact which only appears in its full bearings after a careful study of the reports of the Missionary Conference of 1910 in Edinburgh; that fact is, Christ and His Gospel is a living power at work now, as at the beginning, producing ever the same results. If Pentecost had been an isolated event, incapable of repetition, we might have been in some doubt. But Pentecost has been repeating itself, and is repeating itself still. Always the Church in prayer receives a visitation of the tongues of fire, and then through the translated Bible, or through the trained missionary, she speaks to all nations in their own tongues "the mighty works of God." If there have been periods when the expansion was arrested, and the project of passing on the Gospel to the non-Christian races seemed the dream of madmen, in our day there can be no mistake; the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the life in the Gospel which may have lain dormant has awoke again, and goes out with a fearless confidence to possess the earth. While Providence has brought the ends of the earth together by rapid communications, and the idea of the solidarity of man comes into the sphere of practical

achievement, this vital power of the Gospel, which justifies us in maintaining that the living Christ is with us all the days unto the end of the world, renews itself to possess the unified earth. And in this prolonged, and deepened, and expanded Pentecost we may see, if we will, the Spirit of God, who brooded on chaos to make an ordered world, who entered into man to make a being in the image of God, who brought Jesus into the world, and possessed Him without measure, who came at Pentecost to give Him to all nations and tongues, who, remaining and working among men as the Paraclete, was to maintain the divine life in men until the purpose of man's creation should be accomplished.

It is a great misfortune if we are so absorbed in the secular that we miss the religious progress of our race. It is an almost equal misfortune if we are so absorbed in the sectional work of our own Church, or of the little circle in which we move, that we do not notice Christ ever renewing His ancient advances, and His Gospel winning its widening way in the earth. As the Spirit is the working agent of missions, missions are the clearest evidence of the Spirit.

V. But drawing back to the internal life of the Church itself, we have a very startling proof of the Spirit's constant activity in *those quickenings and renewals* which are ever coming, we know not how or whence. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." So is this divine Pneuma, bringing life, when and how He will.

We noticed just now how the revival which we

associate with John Wesley grew up with and followed on the work of the Deists and Encyclopædists, so that the barren age of doubt and denial issued in a period of extraordinary spiritual life. In the same way the Anglican Church, which had fallen into a curious moderatism and indifference, typified by Sidney Smith's contempt of Carey and derision of the Missionary effort, experienced a wonderful quickening in what is called the Catholic Revival. The breath of the Spirit passed over the Church; Keble wrote *The Christian Year*; Pusey was a saint of the medieval type; Newman was a genius, and took his place at once among the immortals of the human spirit; where all was deadness, conventionality, profound scepticism about the realities of God and the Spiritual life, the sound of the going was heard in the tops of the trees; and the Church of England awoke to a new consciousness of her specific character, and of her mission in the world.

This wind of God which moves in the valley of dry bones, and which brings to the winter-earth the sense of showers, sunshine, and spring, has been so frequent and periodic in its visitations that we may now with a firm faith anticipate a great spiritual awakening to follow on the torpor, the unbelief, the embittered godlessness which culminated in the war.

The agents whom the Spirit uses for these quickening visitations come mysteriously, we know not how, and beforehand we cannot guess from whence. The "holy Club" in Lincoln College, led by its prim and formal pietist, John Wesley, did not at the first give promise of spreading over the whole world, and of

transforming the religious life of England. Lecky says that Pitt and Wesley saved England; but who could have foreseen how? And the Oxford Movement of the nineteenth century stole in amid the hostility or derision of contemporaries, a Spiritual force that none could have predicted or even expected. That is the wonder of these Movements of the Spirit; they do not run in grooves; they are not repetitions, but new creations. Like the tiny cloud of a hand-breadth in the brazen heavens, the force gathers, and deepens and widens. The Creative Evolution which Bergson has taught us to see in nature has its analogue in the work of the Spirit. Any day we may expect that Divine breath; anywhere may emerge the man or the woman filled with the Spirit and prepared for the task; no one can foresee what will be the new birth of time. The incoming tide may submerge the old landmarks, and sweep away all the crumbling ruins. The City of God may rise on sure foundations more glorious than ever before. We wait and watch as they who wait for the morning. This conviction the Spirit works in us, that as God never leaves Himself without a witness, so He loves to surpass Himself. The early thirteenth century was a time of the tottering Church, but the "little poor man" of Assisi was prepared and called to put his shoulder under it as a support. The early sixteenth century was a time when the venerable building seemed to be falling into irretrievable ruin; but the monk of Wittenburg was called to summon the lagging centuries and to lash them up the way of reform and regeneration. So may it be again; the Knights of

the Holy Ghost are in training; the word of command will come from heaven; the Church will live again and be equal to her task. Happy are they who are called to live in a period of the outpoured Spirit, but the slow watches of the night belong to God; and they have their blessing too, who, knowing from the past the ways of the Spirit, are expectant and prepared for the glorious day of the awakening.

VI. And apart from the Church as an institution altogether, there is *a steady urge of things onward, and upward, and Godward*, which might well convince considering minds that the Spirit of God is the inward force impelling the world's evolution. When we fall into a backward eddy, such as the war has been, we have our misgivings and doubts whether after all there is any valuable advance in human affairs. But the settled conviction of the mind cannot be altered by even the greatest and most catastrophic accidents. There is in everyone a latent presupposition, which may never come to expression and yet influences all thought and action, that an increasing purpose is working itself out in the life and in the thought of men. We tend towards betterment, we make for a nobler and fuller human life, for a harmonious relation of the races and peoples of the earth, for a mastery of the forces of Nature, in the interests of love and harmony and peace. We hold this conviction even through the war, the most serious contradiction of it that we, or any generation, can experience. In the generation before the war we were just recovering from a prolonged shock. The rapid advance of natural science in the later half of the nineteenth century had threatened

Faith, had overthrown established religious conceptions, had produced an assumption that Matter was the origin of Spirit, and Matter was the only Creator with which we were concerned. From this dogma, which darkened the Spirit, we were escaping in the wholly unexpected way, by discovering that Matter, so far from explaining creation, is the mystery which itself stands in need of explanation, and on investigation proves to be something far more akin to Spirit than to what we thought was Matter. It is Materialism, and not the Spirit, that has perished.

And then we were subjected to a test of another kind, but almost as severe: the war, a reversion to early barbarism, a barbarism now armed with all the results of discovery, invention, and thought which our civilisation has produced, threatened our civilisation itself, threatened the existence of a Theistic religion, threatened even those human feelings and principles which Christianity has, so slowly, developed. We cannot wonder if the unstable and unbelieving are shaken. But brave and discerning hearts are undaunted, they are persuaded that the progress of mankind will survive the cataclysm, as the seasons go on despite storms and earthquakes; they even perceive certain spiritual triumphs in the war itself, which may make the world, now war is over, incomparably better and more hopeful than if the catastrophe had never come. The fire is burning the stubble and the unwholesome ruins of civilisation, not civilisation itself; humanity is learning a lesson which will enrich it for ever. The horror, the destruction, the deterioration of war will make it the first charge on human thought and political

organisation to avoid war in the future. An assured progress for human kind may open up in an effective solidarity of the whole race.

No, the field of experience is too wide, the records of antiquity are too copious, to admit of serious doubt. Any fair comparison of Christian civilisation with Antiquity, or even of the modern world with the Middle Ages, restores the certainty that progress is steady though very gradual, and certain, though exposed to perpetual shocks. There is an Evolution going on, which implies an End; and the impulse, the direction, of the development comes not from Matter but from Mind, not from chance but from God. And this, unless we wilfully shut our eyes against evidence, is the proof of the Holy Spirit's unceasing activity.

VII. But turning back, in conclusion, to the Church again, we may detect the Spirit's presence most unmistakably in such a longing for Unity, and even Reunion, as that which animates our time, the product, in some degree, of the war. As we may be sure that the unity which our Lord prayed for is intrinsically in His Church, so we may be deeply conscious of the need for a more effective union, a closer and more articulated relation of the members of His body. It is the work of the Spirit that has opened our eyes to the friction, and the waste, and the feelings of alienation involved in divisions, which were yet necessary in their time for the vindication and expression of the whole of truth. The yearning for union is a movement of the Spirit that is in the severed members. Like islets in an Archipelago, to use Matthew Arnold's image, we begin to fret at the

severing sea. The tides of the Spirit wash the shores, the gale of the Spirit breathes from island to island, wafting the perfume of the spices across the straits.

> The islands feel the encircling flow
> And then their endless bounds they know.
> But when the moon their hollows lights,
>   And they are swept with balms of Spring,
> And in their glens on starry nights
>   The nightingales divinely sing,
> And lovely notes from shore to shore
> Across their straits and channels pour—
>   Oh, then a longing like despair
>   Is to their inmost caverns sent,
> "Oh, surely once," they feel, "we were
>   Parts of a single continent;
> Now round us spreads the watery plain,
> Oh, might our marges meet again!"

Nor is the Spirit here merely a vague sentiment, a desire, a yearning. There is an intelligent conviction, which takes possession of the Reason, that the time has come when here in England, at least, the Churches which hold the reformed faith have no justification for weakening their forces by division. Their essential creed is one; their ideal is one; the reasons for separation have grown faint and inoperative compared with the reasons for union. We all begin to feel (under the Spirit's influence) the guilt of raising any barrier which the truth of the Gospel does not demand, or of maintaining any separation which is not required by a spiritual necessity.

When, therefore, we attempt to trace the operation of the Spirit in the Churches, following the facts rather than the theories, and insisting on the recognition of the Spirit, wherever He may be at work, we are led

on to the conviction that the Spirit is striving towards unity; and in proportion as we desire not to resist the Spirit, nor to quench the Spirit, nor to grieve the Spirit, we become sensitively eager to search and find out whereunto the Spirit is impelling us, that we may co-operate in His holy purpose. We are not likely, under His guidance, to mistake a forced and artificial unity of organisation for the organic unity which is the expression of His life, but we desire with a great desire to make channels for His flowing life, and to offer ourselves as the ready organs of His great design.

> Spirit of purity and grace
> Our weakness pitying see;
> Oh, make our hearts Thy dwelling-place
> And worthier Thee.

If this prayer should be answered, we may see in our day a miracle accomplished, the old divisions completely submerged under the rising tide of the Spirit, and the English Church one, and her name one.

APPENDIX

Towards Christian Unity

Second Interim Report of a Sub-Committee appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York's Committee and by Representatives of the English Free Churches' Commissions, in connection with the proposed World Conference on Faith and Order.

In issuing our Second Interim Report we desire to prevent possible misconceptions regarding our intentions. We are engaged, not in formulating any basis of reunion for Christendom, but in preparing for the consideration of such a basis at the projected Conference on Faith and Order. We are exploring the ground in order to discover the ways of approach to the questions to be considered that seem most promising and hopeful. In our first Report we were not attempting to draw up a creed for subscription, but desired to affirm our agreement upon certain foundation truths as the basis of a spiritual and rational creed and life for all mankind in Christ Jesus the Lord. It was a matter of profound gratitude to God that we found ourselves so far in agreement. No less grateful were we that even as

regards matters relating to Order we were able to hold certain common convictions, though in regard to these we were forced to recognise differences of interpretation. We felt deeply, however, that we could not let the matter rest there; but that we must in conference seek to understand one another better, in order to discover if even on the questions on which we seemed to differ most we might not come nearer to one another.

1. In all our discussions we were guided by two convictions from which we could not escape, and would not, even if we could.

> It is the purpose of our Lord that believers in Him should be one visible society, and this unity is essential to the purpose of Christ for His Church and for its effective witness and work in the world. The conflict among Christian nations has brought home to us with a greater poignancy the disastrous results of the divisions which prevail among Christians, inasmuch as they have hindered that growth of mutual understanding which it should be the function of the Church to foster, and because a Church which is itself divided cannot speak effectively to a divided world.
>
> The visible unity of believers which answers to our Lord's purpose must have its source and sanction, not in any human arrangements, but in the will of the One Father, manifested in the Son, and effected through the operation of the Spirit; and it must express and maintain the fellowship of His people with one another in Him. Thus the visible unity of the Body of Christ is not adequately

expressed in the co-operation of the Christian Churches for moral influence and social service, though such co-operation might with great advantage be carried much further than it is at present ; it could only be fully realised through community of worship, faith and order, including common participation in the Lord's Supper. This would be quite compatible with a rich diversity in life and worship.

2. In suggesting the conditions under which this visible unity might be realised we desire to set aside for the present the abstract discussion of the origin of the Episcopate historically, or its authority doctrinally ; and to secure for that discussion when it comes, as it must come, at the Conference, an atmosphere congenial not to controversy, but to agreement. This can be done only by facing the actual situation in order to discover if any practical proposals could be made that would bring the Episcopal and Non-Episcopal Communions nearer to one another. Further, the proposals are offered not as a basis for immediate action, but for the sympathetic and generous consideration of all the Churches.

The first fact which we agree to acknowledge is that the position of Episcopacy in the greater part of Christendom as the recognised organ of the unity and continuity of the Church is such that the members of the Episcopal Churches ought not to be expected to abandon it in assenting to any basis of reunion.

The second fact which we agree to acknowledge

is that there are a number of Christian Churches not accepting the Episcopal order which have been used by the Holy Spirit in His work of enlightening the world, converting sinners, and perfecting saints. They came into being through reaction from grave abuses in the Church at the time of their origin, and were led in response to fresh apprehensions of divine truth to give expression to certain types of Christian experience, aspiration and fellowship, and to secure rights of the Christian people which had been neglected or denied.

In view of these two facts, if the visible unity so much desired within the Church, and so necessary for the testimony and influence of the Church in the world is ever to be realised, it is imperative that the Episcopal and Non-Episcopal Communions shall approach one another not by the method of human compromise, but in correspondence with God's own way of reconciling differences in Christ Jesus. What we desire to see is not grudging concession, but a willing acceptance for the common enrichment of the united Church of the wealth distinctive of each.

Looking as frankly and as widely as possible at the whole situation, we desire with a due sense of responsibility to submit for the serious consideration of all the parts of a divided Christendom what seem to us the necessary conditions of any possibility of reunion :

1. That continuity with the historic Episcopate should be effectively preserved.

2. That in order that the rights and responsi-

bilities of the whole Christian community in the government of the Church may be adequately recognised, the Episcopate should re-assume a constitutional form, both as regards the method of the election of the bishop as by clergy and people, and the method of government after election. It is perhaps necessary that we should call to mind that such was the primitive ideal and practice of Episcopacy and it so remains in many Episcopal communions to-day.

3. That acceptance of the fact of Episcopacy and not any theory as to its character should be all that is asked for. We think that this may be the more easily taken for granted as the acceptance of any such theory is not now required of ministers of the Church of England. It would no doubt be necessary before any arrangement for corporate reunion could be made to discuss the exact functions which it may be agreed to recognise as belonging to the Episcopate, but we think this can be left to the future.

The acceptance of Episcopacy on these terms should not involve any Christian community in the necessity of disowning its past, but should enable all to maintain the continuity of their witness and influence as heirs and trustees of types of Christian thought, life and order, not only of value to themselves but of value to the Church as a whole. Accordingly we hope and desire that each of these Communions would bring its own distinctive contribution, not only to the common life of the Church, but also to its methods of organisation,

and that all that is true in the experience and testimony of the uniting Communions would be conserved to the Church. Within such a recovered unity we should agree in claiming that the legitimate freedom of prophetic ministry should be carefully preserved; and in anticipating that many customs and institutions which have been developed in separate communities may be preserved within the larger unity of which they have come to form a part.

We have carefully avoided any discussion of the merits of any polity, or any advocacy of one form in preference to another. All we have attempted is to show how reunion might be brought about, the conditions of the existing Churches and the convictions held regarding these questions by their members being what they are. As we are persuaded that it is on these lines and these alone that the subject can be approached with any prospect of any measure of agreement, we do earnestly ask the members of the Churches to which we belong to examine carefully our conclusions and the facts on which they are based, and to give them all the weight that they deserve.

In putting forward these proposals we do so because it must be felt by all good-hearted Christians as an intolerable burden to find themselves permanently separated in respect of religious worship and communion from those in whose characters and lives they recognise the surest evidences of the indwelling Spirit; and because, as becomes increasingly evident, it is only as a body, praying, taking counsel, and acting together, that the Church can hope to appeal to men as the Body of Christ, that is Christ's visible organ and instrument

in the world, in which the Spirit of brotherhood and of love as wide as humanity finds effective expression.

(Signed) G. W. Bath : and Well : (*Chairman*).
E. Winton :
C. Oxon :
W. T. Davison.
A. E. Garvie.
H. L. Goudge.
J. Scott Lidgett.
W. B. Selbie.
J. H. Shakespeare.
Eugene Stock.
William Temple.
Tissington Tatlow (*Hon. Sec.*).
H. G. Wood.

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APPENDIX B

RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions were passed at the Conference in Mansfield College, Oxford, on January 6–8, 1919, between some members of the Church of England and of the Free Churches.

I. We welcome, with profound gratitude to God, as a token of the manifest working of His Spirit, the manifold evidences around us of better relations between the Christian Churches, resulting in a fuller understanding of each other's positions, and in a more earnest longing for complete Fellowship in a Reunited Church.

II. We are in entire accord in our mutual Recognition of the Communions to which we belong as Christian Churches, Members of the One Body of Christ; and we record our judgment that this Recognition is fundamental for any approach towards the realisation of that Reunited Church, for which we long and labour and pray.

III. We hold that this Recognition must involve, for its due expression, reciprocal participation in the Holy Communion, as a testimony to the Unity of the Body of Christ.

IV. We recognise, with the Sub-Committee of "Faith and Order," in its Second Interim Report, the place which a reformed Episcopacy must hold in the ultimate Constitution of the Re-united Church; and we do not doubt that the Spirit of God will lead the Churches of Christ, if resolved on Reunion, to such a Constitution as will also fully conserve the essential values of the other historical types of Church Polity, Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist.

V. As immediate practical means of furthering this movement towards Unity, we desire to advocate interchange of pulpits, under proper authority; gatherings of Churchmen and Nonconformists for more intimate fellowship through common study and prayer; association in common work through Local Conferences, Joint Missions, Joint Literature, and Interdenominational Committees for social work.

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